

DZOGCHEN

A Matter of Mind



Keith Dowman

Buddhism / Dzogchen

This book provides a lucid introduction to the high existential reality of Dzogchen. In a dozen chapters Dzogchen is introduced as a mind-yoga that transcends the Buddhism that nurtures it. This is the Dzogchen that is taking root in the West as the stance that is required as an existential panacea and a guarantee for survival of the human race. The notion that it is our ordinary consciousness, already present, available to all, that is our 'all-good' nature itself, seems to be at the heart of Dzogchen. Free from its religio-buddhist context, Dzogchen as presented here stands alone as the mindset that can give here-and-now clarity.

"This Dzogchen is the core of Tibetan Buddhism", Bhakha Tulku Pema Rigdzin.

Keith Dowman, the author of these essays, is a rare guide to freedom within Tibetan Buddhism.



Dzogchen
Now!

ISBN 9781796236446



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Dzogchen Now! Books

2019

Published by *Dzogchen Now! Books*

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ISBN-9781796236446

Cover design by Santiago Uribe Franco

Printed in the U.S.A.

Font set in Garamond 10.5 pt

Dedicated to the memory of the original
lamas of the Tibetan diaspora.

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Preface

It has often been said that the introductions to the books of my translation of Dzogchen texts stand alone as explanatory teaching upon Dzogchen itself. So here they are as chapters in a book which may be considered at best congealed pointing out instruction and at worst explanations of Dzogchen theory. Many people, rightfully attached to the marvelous English language, have a natural aversion to translation, crabbed or stylish, and prefer potted versions of Tibetan texts which provide a short-cut to the essence of the Dzogchen matter. I say 'congealed' pointing out instruction because in the same way that the conception and aspiration differs from the act itself, conceptualized Dzogchen only gives a tangential glimpse of buddha-enlightenment, an ideal experience of the world, and tends to taste like reheated porridge. But I hope these essays clear away a lot of false notions about Dzogchen, the principal erroneous notion being that Dzogchen can be attained by hard work. At best these essays may define Dzogchen as an experience of immediacy and provide koans that can induce a direct understanding. At their worst, they may be informative, providing a guide to the texts that they once introduced. If they inspire people to realization of Dzogchen they will have performed a useful function and if they induce readers to plunge into the translations of the original Tibetan texts and thereby enter the Dzogchen stream that also may prove auspicious.

In my estimation, it is the works on early Dzogchen that hold most value for contemporary Dzogchen aspirants. Bairotsana's five transmissions, which may be considered the essence of the Mind Series, contain the entire Dzogchen story. Longchenpa presents this essence, somewhat elaborated, in the perfected prose of the *Seven Treasures*. By Jigme Lingpa's time Dzogchen had become expanded, organized and sophisticated for a more intellectual monastic audience. The form of Jigme Lingpa's *Yeshe Lama* and Tsulo Rinpoche's *Boundless Vision* are structured as 'stages of the path' (*lamrim*), a sure sign of the degradation of Dzogchen. In that form it has come down to us through contemporary scholarly yogins, and I try to separate the grain from the chaff.

The order of the essays follow roughly the historical appearance of the works they consider. The development of Dzogchen from the Empire period through the high of the 13th/14th century is followed after a long gap by Jigme Lingpa's 18th century renaissance and the latter-day commentaries concluding with modern 'syncretic' texts. The earliest work is from Bairotsana in the 8th century, translation from the earliest Dzogchen texts, *The Five Early Translations*. Then translations from Longchenpa's 14th century *Treasures of Natural Perfection* and *Spaciousness* representing the high point of Dzogchen exegesis in Central Tibet. Jigme Lingpa's 18th century *Yeshe Lama* is the practice manual relating to his *Longchen Nyingtik* revelation in the Southern Terma tradition, and *Boundless Vision* is a 19th century practice manual based in the peerless works of Godemchan. Dudjom Rinpoche's

Mountain Dharma is a short text based on talks given to Tibetan yogins in the mid 20th century in Tibet, while Pema Rigtsal's *Great Secret of Mind* provides a sourcebook for the three-in-one level of teaching designed for both East Asian and Western students of Dzogchen. The final two contributions refer to compilations of texts. The first, *Guru Pema Here and Now*, has as its kernel *guru namtars* from the 13th and 14th century Tibet and a commentary on the Seven Line Prayer from 20th century Mipham Rinpoche. The second, the *Flight of the Garuda* is the brilliant 19th century teaching of Shabkar Rinpoche, but it also contains—among other things—Patrul Rinpoche's *Three Invasive Precepts*, both authors being Khampa savants of the Khampa renaissance, which is still in progress.

The section Additional Excerpts includes material that for one reason or another I thought better excluded from the sections from which they were excerpted. Perhaps it was too technical or too nit-picky, or acknowledged debts that I could not ignore.

I have edited the material lightly to include further grammatical insights and vocabulary. The introductory material to *The Flight of the Garuda*, which was the first of my Dzogchen flights (early '90s) has been cut back and clipped to provide an easily accessible introduction to Dzogchen. I have standardized some terms where second thoughts seemed vastly superior, like 'Space Series' instead of 'Matrix Series', 'and intrinsic presence' rather than 'gnosis' for *rangrik* or *rikpa*. Also, in the later works, proper nouns are capitalized while their adjectival form is left in lower case—'Buddhism' but 'buddhist', the historical Buddha but 'buddha' as the generic liberated condition; 'Christ' and 'Christianity' but 'christian', etc. Footnotes have been reduced. Apologies for a failure to standardize all the spelling in the various chapters—they were written over a period of twenty years.

Finally, a cautionary caveat: The finger pointing at the moon, surely, is nothing but 'the moon' itself. So what exactly is 'the moon'?

I will finish this preface with acknowledgement of the Tibetan lamas of the diaspora who showed me how Buddhism was to be transcended as Dzogchen and how Dzogchen was actually the common experience of sensory perception in the here-and-now but unsullied by apperceptive, subjective, thought.

Dzogchen: A Matter of Mind

Here-and-Now: Original Perfection

Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, is perhaps best understood as the climax of all nondual mystical aspiration. Within the Tibetan context, it lies at the heart of both Buddhism and Bon. Taking its cultural and linguistic references from both, it may appear to be limited to those traditions; but to see its existential reality restricted to that cultural frame would contradict the Tibetan precepts that define it as utterly nonspecific and unconfined. Historically Buddhism provided the ground in which the precepts of the Great Perfection appeared, and certainly it still provides a rich and wonderful metaphysical field of reference. But the principles of radical Dzogchen are appropriate to every religious and cultural context. All religion and culture is transcended by its formless essence. It subsumes science and humanism today as it once incorporated shamanism and theism. It supersedes religion by shunning dogma and doctrine. It surpasses yoga and meditation by denying technique. It transcends the creativity of the human mind—whether as science or art—through identity with our intrinsic nature. ‘Inclusivity’ defines the Great Perfection.

As mystical endeavor the quest for natural perfection may have continued for as long as human history. If only because natural perfection is inherent in human being and cannot be suppressed, it is hidden in the mysteries of Babylon and Egypt, Greece and Rome, in Indian Tantra, the Chinese Tao, Muslim Sufism, the Jewish Torah and the christian heresies of the Albigensians, the Knights Templar and the Alchemists. Deprived of a lineal tradition, guides, and precepts, it may burst out spontaneously as an imperative of the human spirit, as it did in Europe and America in the ‘sixties. Regardless of the cultural and religious context, the time and the place, the ‘pathless path’ of nondual illumination is always the same because the nature of the mind, being the origin of time and space, is one. It has happened, however, that in the 21st century the exemplars and custodians of this living tradition are the Vajrayana Buddhists, lately of the Tibetan plateau. Nondual mysticism finds its own ground in the scope of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly in the Kahgyu Mahamudra tradition, but it is in its earliest transmission into Tibet, when the tradition of the Ancients (Nyingma) was still in its incipient phase, that we find the most pure and unequivocal statement of the principles and poetic effusion of the heart-meaning of the Great Perfection. That is what is termed ‘radical Dzogchen’.

Given that the oldest and earliest is not necessarily the best, nevertheless the quality of pristine freshness reverberates down the centuries from a culture on

the verge of breakthrough. This quality of 8th century Tibet can be seen particularly in the work of the mystic and poet Bairotsana of Pagor, who at that time wrote down the five poems presented in *Original Perfection (The Eye of the Storm)*. In his work there is a sense of the light of dawn spreading over the landscape to illuminate the darkness in one fell swoop. The word of Dzogchen had arrived to illuminate the murk of spiritualist shamanism, to clarify the buddhist options presented by India, China, Khotan, Gilgit and Uddiyana, and to exalt the lifestyles of the people of the Tibetan plateau. The freshness and vitality of Bairotsana's vision, written down when the Tibetan language was as young as English when Shakespeare wrote still has the power to illuminate, although the shadows that are dispersed today are cast by apocalyptic materialism and consumerism rather than Black Bon.

The power of Bairotsana's five original works may lie in the magic of 'transmission' (*lung*). Bairotsana did not attribute them to himself as the poet but as revelations of Garab Dorje, the human source of the Dzogchen tradition, because all tantras, transmissions and precepts of Dzogchen are said to have the same timeless origin. The verses of each of the five transmissions—consisting generally of a quatrain of two slokas, or couplets—can stand apart as didactic gems of Dzogchen expression, sometimes with only tangential connection between them, but they are better viewed as the multiple facets of a crystal globe, each reflecting an aspect of the whole. The content of the transmissions is always the same—a unitary vision of the nature of mind. The nature of mind (where 'nature' can only mean 'essence') is luminous mind, the one indivisible nondual mind of natural perfection. The holistic product may be personified as the all-good buddha Samantabhadra (Kuntuzangpo), who at the same time is the supreme source of the transmission and the transmission itself. The reader, the recipient of the transmission, is identified, thereby, with the all-good Dzogchen vision of the transmission.

The purpose of these five poems, then, is to induce a vision of natural perfection in the reader. This is not done by logic or causal connection but through the magic, the ambiguity, of poetry. As Patrul Rinpoche writes, 'We do not agree with the common dogma of traditionalists, that the only valid knowledge is mental knowledge tested by reason against textual and logical proof. Experiential understanding of the naked direct perception in primal awareness itself is the Dzogchen vision.'¹ In this sense, each of the five poems constitutes a direct introduction—if not initiation—into the nature of mind and the great perfection. The experience of the transmissions themselves is self-validating, and any rational evaluation of their logic or terms of reference diminishes or blights them. The sole requisite for attaining the vision set down by the poet is a wide-open mind, and since human beings are born with this mind, the great perfection is available to all.

The vision that these transmissions induce is not like a tantric mandala of buddhas or buddha-deities or patterned light-forms. There is not the slightest

hint of symbolism, abstract or anthropomorphic. There is nothing to be seen that has any cultural specificity. There is no articulated abstruse metaphysical infrastructure to the vision. There is nothing that is not intrinsic to the nature of ordinary consciousness and the common light of day. In fact there is no trace of anything there at all. There is no structure to the vision whatsoever—the nature of the transmission is ultimately deconstructive. ‘Simplicity’ is the one single word that may describe it. It is a holistic vision in the sense that it is all inclusive and nondual. It consists of direct naked perception of the nature of mind in every instant of experience.

The essence of the transmission is simple, direct perception. In the timeless moment of the here and now, there is no space for projection or filtration and no time for evaluation, reflection, and judgment. Herein lies natural perfection and the secret of nondual reality. When we speak of nondual mysticism, what is indicated is nothing but the clear light intrinsic to everyday perception; yet this perception and this function of awareness brings ultimate resolution to the human condition. All its dichotomies and contradictions are resolved in the unitary light of awareness in itself. If it can be said that conception and act exist, surely there is no gap between the conceptual initiation of the act and its fulfillment. The unitary moment is its own reward. Time and space are resolved in the all-inclusive wholeness of the moment. The quandaries of embodiment are resolved in each moment. The paradox and antinomies of gender are resolved in the unity of the moment. This is transmission of the Great Perfection that does not impose a new, conditional structure upon the mind but reveals what is already, primordially present. It comes by way of confirmation, then, of what has always been known: that the nature of being, the nature of reality, and the nature of mind are immanent as consummate perfection.

There is nothing in this transmission that can be grasped or conceptualized or cultivated or practiced. To assimilate it into the logical intellect and spin it out as a philosophy or doctrine is to nullify its purpose, just as the magic of poetry is lost in analysis. The transmission itself is a timeless event, like every moment of experience, arising as spontaneity, without cause or condition, so it cannot be developed into a yoga or a meditation practice. It cannot be turned into religion: there are no tenets of belief; neither devotion nor faith is a condition of its revelation; and no ritual interprets and structures it. It is simply an existential understanding of the here and now.

Bairotsana’s five transmissions are compositions of deconstructive precept, expressing the Dzogchen vision of the nature of mind. Their primal impact upon a receptive reader may open a door into the vision of the great perfection. The rational mind, however, may concoct objections to such an unreferenced state and its attendant sense of identity loss. It is here that the commentary engages, providing elaboration through causal connection, lulling the intellect with its bromide, while undermining—deconstructing—the structure of the

intellect by indicating the natural state of being, the supra-rational reality of the great perfection that always lies immanent in the timeless moment. Here, the self-referential language of the tradition points at the unstructured ground of all language, and since this reality lies in an absence of any characteristic, attribute, or function, the upanishadic method of ‘not this!’ ‘not that!’ is employed. The mystery of the Great Perfection resides in its ineffable nondual reality that is a unity but at the same time a multiplicity. It is at once the source and the creation. It is inconceivable and inexpressible. It is enlightened mind or luminous mind. To reveal all experience as this reality is the purpose of Dzogchen, and the self-evident principles of the Dzogchen Mind Series are the transmission.

There is nothing to do! ‘Nonaction’—‘undirected action’ or ‘nondeliberate action’—defines the nature, ethos, and dynamic of the Great Perfection. The here-and-now is a field of immanent sameness, and any attempt to affect it or change it by any technique is counter-productive. Any engagement of effort diminishes it. Seeking it inhibits its discovery. Nonaction is the precept that defines the natural inclination, or lack of any inclination, of the nature of mind in order that the manifest dynamic of the field of reality is uncrystalized in pure presence.

No meditation! No discipline! The luminous mind that is the nature of all experience never comes into being or ceases to be; it cannot be created or destroyed: it has no structure. It cannot, therefore, be accessed through the structured activity of calculated discipline, and all goal-oriented meditation is such structured activity. Letting go of all practice whatsoever, including all the meditation techniques that condition the mind by focusing on an object of sight, sound, or thought, there is no meditation and only an endless continuum of luminous mind. The modality of nonmeditation and no-structure is illustrated particularly in the fourth transmission, *Pure Golden Ore*.

No progress! No development in a graduated process! The moment is perfect and complete in itself, and nothing superior can be effectuated. There is no possibility of attaining anything more desirable than the present moment. No ‘personal growth’ is possible. Evolution toward a higher goal is precluded. There is no maturity to anticipate. The notion of process itself is redundant because it functions through time in a delusive linear pattern constructed by the intellect.

No place to go! The here-and-now is always complete in the present moment, so there is no path to follow, no quest, no journey to pursue, and no destination. It is impossible to move toward or away from luminous-mind reality, since it is always here and now. The inescapable, universal, and all-pervasive reality-modality is ever-immanent. There is no destination other than the naturally liberating dynamic of the moment. This is taught particularly in the second transmission, *Radical Creativity*.

No discrimination! No prejudice or bias! The pristine awareness that is the mind's cognitive nature is utterly free of any judgmental inclination. It does not discriminate between what is good or bad, right or wrong. 'Good' and 'bad' are fictive labels projected upon a neutral screen that in itself is incapable of bias. Whatsoever occurs in everyday experience, excluding nothing, is suffused by this primal awareness and, moment by moment, dissolves into it. All is perfect as it stands, so nothing is rejected or avoided and nothing is accepted or favored above anything else. Nothing is embraced or appropriated and nothing spurned or suppressed. All things are always all-good, and activity is always indiscriminating. This is taught in the first transmission, *The Cuckoo's Song*.

No-one and no-thing to change! The elements of experience, inner and outer, are part of a reality-field (basic spaciousness) in which no indivisible particle can be isolated either in the laboratories of science or those of the mind. The natural unified field is a nondual reality. Every moment of experience is an ineffable expression of that field, and insofar as it is recognized as a field of cognitive being, it is known as utterly perfect and complete in itself. It cannot be improved one iota. It cannot be changed or transformed into something other than pure awareness. Because our identity—nonidentity—lies in luminous mind, whatever illusion of personality arises is utterly pristine.

No controller! No control! The control functions of the ego self-articulated in the rational mind are involuntarily superseded by the pristine awareness of the natural state of being. What appears to rise and fall as sequential instants of experience is insubstantial gossamer illusion, and the dynamic of each perfect moment is spontaneity. Any belief in a substantial, material reality, or in a 'self', a 'soul', an 'ens', or an 'atman', is delusory. There is no controller on any level and so no control. The putative controlling intellect is superseded by the intrinsic dynamic of nonaction. The here and now is free-form display, perfect in its every permutation.

The consummation of these precepts and the transmissions themselves are predicated upon an intuitive realization of the nature of mind as intrinsically pure, an assumption that is authenticated, yet neither 'attested' nor 'proven', in initiatory experience. 'Luminous mind' is a rendering of the buddhist word *bodhicitta*. In Mahayana, the discursive meaning of this word is suffused by the selfless compassionate ethic of the bodhisattva intent upon giving whatsoever is required to whomsoever is in need. More technically, it is translated as 'the thought of enlightenment'. In Vajrayana Buddhism, where buddha-imminence is assumed, it is translated as 'enlightened mind' or 'awakened mind'. In the Dzogchen Mind Series, this enlightened mind is the ground of all, all and everything, and the starting point, the process, and the product in one. It subsumes the field of reality, the process of release, the nature of mind, and primal awareness. Luminous mind is the nondual natural state, and so it cannot possess any definable quality, but in its vastness and depth, in its ineffable

greatness, it exalts our natural state. Its primary endowment lies in direct and immediate enlightenment.

Luminous mind is personified as Samantabhadra, all-good primordial buddha—not a buddha to worship but the actuality of every moment. Those he ‘teaches’, or manifests, are buddha and every sentient beings upon the wheel of life is free of transmigration and rebirth. His ‘teaching’, or manifestation, is the expression of our every moment of experience in a vision of reality as the matrix of all things and all things in themselves as one. The time of his teaching is the one clear timeless moment of past, present, and future rolled into one. And the place of his teaching is the zero-dimensional basic spaciousness.

In our state of natural perfection, the seemingly material world is consumed in its intrinsic nature as light by the pristine awareness inherent in every sensory perception. The four great elements—earth, water, fire and air—that are a condensation of their spatial essence constitute basic spaciousness itself, and the luminous mind, wherein the delusive subjective and objective aspects of experience are unified, endows basic spaciousness with its own luminous display that never crystalizes as this or that. The subjective aspect of the unitary field, the sense of personal identity, is defined as the space where nothing can be found by seeking, nothing can be accomplished by endeavor, nothing whatsoever can be improved upon, and where there can be no progress or maturation. This is the natural state of primordial, pre-existent enlightenment. But because that state cannot become an object of focus, since it is in no way conceivable or imaginable, determinable or demonstrable, it is better termed ‘non-enlightenment’. Only in that sense is there universal enlightenment.

The expression of luminous mind is the compassion that suffuses our experience like water in milk. Such compassion is the potential of every possible convention and variation of human character and personality, every quality and attribute, every affectation and every foible, every vice and virtue, and every weirdness and extreme manifestation of being on the wheel of life. The psychological diversity of experience therein is expressed in the equivocal terms of men, gods, titans, hungry ghosts, animals and hell beings. Yet the wheel of life is the expression of the compassion of luminous mind, and compassion is the wheel of life. The primordial buddha Samantabhadra embraces the totality of luminous mind as its essential emptiness, its radiant luminosity, and its compassionate expression.

The vast spaciousness of luminous mind is personified as Vajrasattva, and primal awareness is his exaltation. The spaciousness of reality is spontaneously cognitive in a nondual modality, and Vajrasattva represents the individuation of that event. That moment is inherently liberating, so there can never be any experience whatsoever that is not spontaneously and momentarily released. Vajrasattva’s ineluctable presence provides that assurance. Primal awareness of the field of reality is a constant, and therefore Vajrasattva receives his name

Immutable Being. The vajra is a symbol of his immovable and imperturbable nature of constant luminous awareness. His immutable dynamic is the freedom of the Great Perfection.

Insofar as there is only luminous mind in our experience, insofar as the vajra is inherent in every moment, there can never be either separation or nonseparation from Vajrasattva, which is a manner of stating the ineffable immanence of the natural state of being in the Great Perfection. So there can never be any obstacle to that natural state. What appears to obstruct the recognition of intrinsic cognitive spaciousness is attachment to the mere shimmering of gossamer phantasm, which is like a film of tarnish on pure gold. If this attachment appears to veil the nature of mind, then what is required is a fortuitous lurch into an intuition of the attachment itself as pristine awareness—a flash of realization or a recollection of initiatory experience. If the problems that arise from the exigencies of personal karma extrude into the forefront of our minds and a sense of constant interruption of the natural flow obsesses us, then what fortuitously arises is intuition of the intrinsic clarity of the glitch itself. Thus the seeming obstacles that arise in the mind provide the key to their own resolution.

Some people are convinced that their desire, anger and emotional confusion are a thick veil over their enlightened mind, but the recognition of the light and pure pleasure in the marvelous display of energetic expression dissipates such delusive belief. Some are convinced that the implacable logic of the intellect and attachment to its pleasures create the trap that locks in the spaciousness, but each intellectual construct and each train of thought constitutes a door into Vajrasattva's vast space. To overcome what appear to be emotional and intellectual obstacles, people commit themselves to disciplines of lifestyle and morality, yoga and meditation, setting themselves the goal of freedom from attachment and rebirth, but the anxiety entailed by prostituting the moment for some future benefit and striving for a conceptual goal is resolved naturally in the relaxation of nonaction. The disease of calculated endeavor and goal orientation that is spiritual materialism is healed by the spontaneous and ineluctable intuition of the pure nature of mind.

The futility of trying to catch what is already in the cage or to grope all around for spectacles that are already perched on the end of the nose inevitably dawns upon the goal-obsessed yogin or yogini, and it is well that we are prepared for that disillusionment by recollection of the spaciousness and radiance that we know from fortuitous initiation into the nature of mind. Decisively, we arrive at the place where the moral imperatives instilled by the plain logic and symmetry of belief in karmic concatenation are seen to provide still more of the same anxious transmigration from one neurotic trap to another and where relaxation into the timeless moment of the here and now—doing nothing—allows the clarity and emptiness of the natural state of being to shine through. When the compulsions of karmic causality and belief in moral imperatives fall

away and dissolve and we surrender to the buddha dynamic of spontaneous contemplation, pristine awareness naturally prevails, superseding any residual trust in the world of karma.

With recognition of the reality thus defined, there is simultaneous recognition of the samaya commitments of Dzogchen—absence, openness, spontaneity, and unity. By their very nature, these samayas cannot be guarded or sustained. On the contrary, awareness of their actuality is a constant and natural presence that can never be vouchsafed or gainsaid. These samayas are not provisional commitments to be renounced upon reaching any goal. They are the reality of buddha here and now that can be expressed as one single commitment—commitment to pristine awareness itself. This awareness always has primacy. It is coextensive and coterminous with the space of sameness that exalts all cognition as pure presence. Pure presence is the direct experience of the moment in which there is no subjective or objective component, although in it the delusive and the nondelusive are inextricably mixed. It is intrinsic awareness of being effervescent in the timeless wholeness of purity and impurity. It is the common light of day.

What constitutes the display of Samantabhadra may not differ in kind from the forms of the neurotic universes that are being neutralized. The retinue of Samantabhadra is composed of buddha as sentient beings, and the diaphanous radiance of rainbow light suffuses the very illusions that once seemed so concrete and cloying. The projections of the psychological environments of hungry ghosts, for example, may still be in place, but now the hair-raising figments of imagination that populate those environments are like the ferocious yet empty masks of lama dance. Further, in the human realm, many people, particularly Buddhists, have entered the various graduated paths to enlightenment. Each rests on his own level, which is complete and perfect in itself. All the activities of gods and men are complete and perfect in themselves, and although they may pursue goal-oriented activity and constantly create or encounter seeming glitches in the universal process of awakened reality, the liberating capacity of Vajrasattva, who suffuses the five elements that constitute embodiment in an apparent concrete environment, is always immanent.

The different lifestyles and the associated visions, therapies and meditation techniques employed by monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, yogins and yoginis, and tulkus and dakinis may be conceived of hierarchically in a pyramid of increasingly destructured mind. This ninefold hierarchy is employed by the commentary on the root verses of the texts as an index of different mind states and allows a focus upon the varying progressive approaches that, although delusive as paths to nondual reality, are perfect in themselves. Nine is a perfect or infinite number in shamanic numerology, so that the nine conventional approaches or levels that provide the mainstay subsume all others. By the same token, the nine levels of discursive meaning in the transmission, each directed toward and heard by those for whom it is relevant, subsume all other levels in

the quest for the nature of mind. Further, as the traditional metaphor has it, just as a king never leaves his palace without his entourage in appropriate association, so Dzogchen Ati is always accompanied by a retinue composed of the innumerable disciplines that seek to modify or improve the human condition—for a mark of human birth is the impulsion to attain happiness. The teacher of the Great Perfection, Samantabhadra, incorporates a vast, all-inclusive retinue of beings, each preoccupied by his personal path on which appropriate transmission may be fortuitously received.

The nine approaches, or levels from the apex, are atiyoga, anuyoga, mahayoga, tantra or sattvayoga, ubhayayoga, kriyayoga, and the varying praxis of bodhisattvas, hermits (*pratyekabuddhas*), and disciples (*śrāvakas*). On the level of atiyoga, the hyper-yogin is adept in the recognition of all experience as transmission of the great perfection. On the level of anuyoga, identity of reality and pure presence, space and awareness is shown, so that every mind-created phenomenon becomes primal awareness. On the mahayoga level, the elements of the psycho-organism and the elements of perception and the sense fields are revealed as our timeless enlightened identity; mahayoga is taught so that the structure of the conditioned mind is recognized as fivefold buddha. In the mind-created vision of tantrayoga, although the passions are not abandoned, attachment to them is utterly forsaken, and sacred substances are literally enjoyed; thereby, in signless, open vulnerability, primal awareness is allowed and the four consorts are recognized. Ubhayayoga teaches the identity of clear light with its colored diffusion, of self-sprung awareness and the sensory phantasmagoria. In the praxis of disciples engaged in listening and learning, hermits in ascetic retreat, and bodhisattvas in pursuit of compassion, the nature of mind involuntarily shines through.

Finally, to distinguish between the recipients of these transmissions, those who are ready vessels with an innate affinity for the natural great perfection attain the vision merely by reading the transmission or by hearing the precepts—thus ‘liberation by hearing’. Through recognition of the natural state of mind, whatever arises is released and dissolves immediately, leaving no trace. The Dzogchen yogin or yogini’s existential modality is then commensurate with the imprint of a bird in the sky. All experience is like a dance and like the free play of sensual pleasure. There is no meditation and no meditator. If glitches arise they are immediately turned into a timeless moment of mental effort and become a door back into the space of the great perfection that actually can never be relinquished. Assimilating the affirmation and confirmation of initiatory experience that atiyoga provides in the transmission it is absorbed without reflection in the nondiscriminatory totality of an anonymous body of light.

Then there are those who see the vision of Samantabhadra clearly through this transmission but lose it thereafter. Through a verbal introduction, or some initiatory experience, they accept the vision as the apotheosis of human nature,

and with subsequent intimation of the nature of mind they enjoy nonmeditation. But then immersed in the mundane concerns of life—profit and loss, love and hate, success and failure, fame and disgrace—they see the figments of their minds as personality isolates interacting in a concrete environment, and becoming attached to seemingly external phenomena the vision of Samantabhadra is lost. Fortuitously and inevitably, however, the vision and nonmeditation does return to mind, like the rising sun, and with increased familiarity and intimacy allows fearless, wholehearted surrender to the nature of mind. Pristine awareness then resumes its natural primacy. Confidence in nonaction is reaffirmed. Belief in mental constructs slackens. Fictive projections fade away. Through the temerity of recognition of the supreme source in whatever arises, in the bardo, natural perfection is recognized in a body of light.

Then there are those who perceive the vision as through a glass darkly, and overruled by judgmental thought while reading or hearing the transmission, conceptualize it and analyze it and become susceptible to doubt. In a rationalistic process the vision is externalized and distanced and becomes a subtle and substantial goal to be achieved with a coincident sense of separation and inadequacy in the face of it. Samsara is divorced from nirvana in this process of linear thought through time, and caught on the horns of conflicting emotion we are susceptible to expectation and apprehension, hope and fear, and lost in a dualistic universe we see ourselves as a small creature faced with an impenetrable ‘reality’.

‘Our actions are determined by karma,’ we say. ‘We are subject to karmic retribution. We are bound to the inevitable cycle of transmigration on the wheel of time.’ ‘We have received Samantabhadra’s transmission and it has given us a glimpse of perfection for a moment. But we are left with only an intellectual understanding, and it has not affected our way of being.’ ‘We live in a world of preferences and partiality, attachments and aversions, discrimination and judgment, hopes and fears.’ ‘We are not ready,’ we demur with a sense of our own inadequacy. ‘We are just beginners. We need to improve ourselves, to be good and virtuous, to control our energy patterns, to set goals and attain them, to climb the ladder of ‘spiritual purity’.

Riddled by such intellectual and emotional conflict, infected by hopes and fears, we conclude that something must be done, that remedial action is prescribed in order to attain the nondual state of the vision. Such readers may go on to devote their lives to a graduated path of endeavor, practicing some meditation technique or yoga, failing to adopt recognition of the perfection of their natural state.

On the other hand, many hear the transmission, think about it, and lacking any initiatory experience they reject it and turn away. For them there never can be anything but material illusion, and they live as beggars on the wheel of

transmigration, believing that the apparent world is concrete and the states of mind in which they find themselves are real. Attached to the pleasant and averse to the painful, unknowingly they await the revelation of the nature of mind.

Pagor Bairotsana: The Great Translator

In the vision of the Great Perfection, the five transmissions are Dharmakaya Samantabhadra himself. Through the medium of Vajrasattva, and the uniting of vowels and consonants, the transmission arises as a timeless display of compassionate emanation in the nature of mind. This revelation is known as Vajra Delight, or Garab Dorje, who is also the adiguru, the first nirmanakaya teacher, of the Dzogchen lineage. Pagor Bairotsana was his Tibetan translator.

In the 8th century, the locus of political and cultural vigor in Central Asia still lay in Tibet. The nomads of a united Central Tibet had created a military empire that stretched from Persia to China, from Nepal to Mongolia. Their shamanic heritage, under the influence of the sophisticated cultures that were now part of their domain, was in the process of transformation. Those cultures in the main were buddhist, although of various hues, and along with the cavalry and diplomats, the traders and artisans, traveling the Himalayan trade routes and all bound for Lhasa, were Chan monks from China, Vajrayana panditas from Bengal, Mahayana scholars from Bihar and Khotan, tantric yogins from Kashmir and the Kathmandu Valley, Hindu sadhus from South India, and Bon shamans from the old kingdom of Zhangzhung that had dominated the Tibetan plateau before the rise of the Yarlung Valley dynasty. Buddhist temples of stone had been built in this land of yak-hair tents, and although the majority of the conservative tribal nobility opposed it, the king sponsored a monastic academy directed by a Bengali abbot who ordained a small band of Tibetan monks.

Less than a day's walk up the Yarlung Tsangpo river valley from the site of the new monastery, in one of the fertile side valleys to the north called Nyemo, was the village of Jekhar. It was from here that the young Bairotsana was called to buddhist ordination by the Bengali abbot Shantarakshita. Being one of the brightest and most strongly motivated of the young monks, he was chosen to focus on the study of language. Existential concerns were a constant preoccupation among a significant element of the royal court, some of whom had also received buddhist ordination along with Bairotsana, and discussion with visiting monks from abroad was fervent and often heated. A yogi-exorcist called Padmasambhava, who had been invited to Samye from Kathmandu, had been successful in confronting the Bon shamans, and the Buddhists were in the ascendant. This itinerant exorcist, a buddhist tantric sadhu wandering the Himalayan valleys for years, leaving a trail of disconsolate dakini-consorts behind him, had already gained notoriety in Tibet by seducing a local princess. He was originally from a kingdom in the far west of the Himalayas called Uddiyana, the land of the dakinis. Uddiyana had become associated with an extraordinary discipline called Dzogchen, known to the Yarlung Tibetans

through their Bon confreres from Zhangzhung who had trans-Himalayan connections in Brusha and other kingdoms in the valleys of the upper Indus tributaries. Perhaps as a reaction to an overload of doctrinal dispute, perhaps based upon a natural inclination toward an effortless discipline promising immediate fulfillment, perhaps due to a secret word passed on by Padmasambhava himself or by another itinerant yogi, a nexus of opinion formed at Samye that Dzogchen was the answer to the existential problems of the Tibetan people. Subsequently, under the auspices of King Trisong Detsen, Bairotsana and a friend were chosen to travel to Uddiyana to bring back to Tibet the Dzogchen transmission.

The direct route to Uddiyana lay up the Yarlung Tsangpo valley, passing to the south of Mount Kailash, and continuing through the ancient Zhangzhung heartland and then down the Indus valley through Ladakh to Kashmir and Gilgit and thence south to what is now Swat and eastern Afghanistan. Bairotsana's journey to Uddiyana and his meeting with the master Shri Singha is the stuff of legend. Near the Dhanakosha Lake, in a sandalwood forest, he found the old master Shri Singha, originally from the Chinese side of the Taklamakan desert, living in a nine-storey pagoda. He needed first to circumvent a protective yogini-crone, a doorkeeper who barred his way, but with a totally ingenuous mind and a stash of gold coins, he passed her by and gained audience with the master. Shri Singha heard his plea for the extraordinary Dzogchen teaching and knew it was destined for the transmission to pass to Tibet. Yet he kept Bairotsana waiting until the following morning. Then he promised the young Tibetan that he would grant him the transmission on the condition that he joined the panditas studying the gradual, causal approaches during the day and only at night time receive the atiyoga teaching. Due to the Uddiyana king's jealousy of Dzogchen Ati, its propagation had been proscribed, so during the nights of transmission the master wrote down the Mind Series transmissions on white silk with goat-milk ink that would become visible only when exposed to heat. Then at Bairotsana's further urging, Shri Singha granted him the Space Series precepts in the black, white, and variegated modes. Still Bairotsana was not satisfied, but Shri Singha would give him no more.²

After this long and intense exposure to Shri Singha, Bairotsana was finally prepared to meet the adiguru of the Dzogchen tradition, the nirmanakaya emanation of Vajrasattva, Garab Dorje himself. This apocryphal encounter occurred in a cremation ground called Dumasthira, the place of fire and smoke, and Bairotsana emerged from the meeting with the transmission of the entire 6,400,000 Dzogchen verses and a body of light.

He returned to Central Tibet by means of his newly acquired speed-walking capacity. Welcomed with all due honor, residing in the royal palace, he began a period of intense translation firstly of the five transmissions, which became known as the Five Early Translations. During this period he taught King

Trisong Detsen the precepts that he was translating in the same way that Shri Singha had taught him—the progressive approach during the day and Dzogchen Ati at night. Proximity to the court, however, was to bring his honeymoon in radical Dzogchen to an end and at the same time contrive to preserve his Dzogchen lineage in Tibet during its period of greatest vulnerability. One of the king's consorts had been influenced by the long and jealous arm of the king of Uddiyana, and in order to curtail Bairotsana's teaching activity, she accused him of raping her and sought to have him banished. The king was reluctant to believe his queen, but eventually succumbing to her repeated denunciation, he exiled Bairotsana to Tsawa Rong in the country of Gyelmo Rong in Kham, in eastern Tibet. There Bairotsana taught Dzogchen to three yogins, among whom Yudra Nyingpo was the principal, establishing a separate and enduring Dzogchen tradition in the east of the country.

When the climate at court finally turned clement, Bairotsana was recalled from exile and continued to teach and translate in Central Tibet. The principal recipients of his transmission were Nyak Jnana Kumara and the Khotanese queen Liza Sherab Dronma. Later he was invited to Khotan and taught there and passed away in that foreign land. Bairotsana is part of the root of most of the Tibetan Dzogchen lineages.³

Old Man Basking in the Sun: Natural Perfection

Dzogchen was a secret tradition in Tibet. It remained so during the lifetime of the grandfather lamas who were the bearers of the tradition and who became refugees in India and Nepal. Today, recognized increasingly as the final analysis and apotheosis of Tibetan Buddhism, translations of Dzogchen texts are freely available in the market place and tulku-lamas teach atiyoga to all-comers throughout the world. Its popularity may be attributed to a single basic tenet which is contained in the notion 'nonaction'. The buddha-nature is immanent in every moment of experience and simply by recognizing the moment and relaxing into it that realization is achieved. Relaxation is the imperative need of our stressed-out culture and relaxation is the key to buddhahood here-and-now. The materialism, rationalism and goal-oriented ambition that mark our contemporary societies is undermined by Dzogchen with its promise of optimal awareness and recognition of a natural state of perfection. Tangentially, the message of Dzogchen provides a functional approach to the medical ills of the age, a redemptive approach to sexuality and a positive, joyful vision of death and dying. These popular effects of Dzogchen, however, should not obscure its fundamental purpose—to recognize the unity of all things in a nondual universe of full awareness, harmony and compassion.

It is unfortunately true that a heavy seriousness tends to pervade texts on the Dzogchen view; but perhaps that is inevitable in works that purport to resolve our every existential quandary. Yet evidently in the work of providing meaningful commentary and translation of Dzogchen texts something crucial in the heart of Dzogchen is being forfeited. This essence of Dzogchen may be characterized as a lightness of being, humor and laid-back detachment, spontaneous joy and an uninhibited freedom of expression. Perhaps these qualities will emerge here through an understanding of the author's intent, but we need to apologize, immediately, for any failure to share this cosmic joke full of joyful laughter, to induce a dance of cosmic energy involving all life and work, and a pacific play of light that is free of all pain and anxiety. The exemplar of Dzogchen may be anonymous, but he is also the divine madman—or the urban yogi—jumping through decisive moments in life as easily as through the most trivial dilemma, gleefully shouting the absurdity of existence from the rooftops and asserting the essential beauty of the human predicament. This Dzogchen text may be read as a paean of joy that loosens every knot, opens up every attenuation and softens every hardening of the psychic arteries in a resolution of the anxiety that marks human embodiment.

Indeed, *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* belongs to a class of Dzogchen literature that promises to induce the awakened state of awareness that it describes. The difficulties of the text arise from an absence of an equivalent English vocabulary to render the self-evident truths of Dzogchen's 'natural' language, a language that constantly refers back to its own empty nature, which is the way of natural perfection. A close reading of the root text, and the repetitions of the commentary, is required to allow the magic of the words to act reflexively in returning the reader to the natural state of perfection. It constitutes, therefore, an introduction to the nature of mind, which in the threefold root precept of the founder of the Dzogchen lineage is the initiatory phase of Dzogchen praxis, succeeded only by the phases of conviction and resolution. Baldly stated, this 'introduction to the nature of mind' may precipitate the crumbling of all mental constructs and intellectual concepts and projections, like the collapse of a house of cards or a complex system of directories in a computer, and the initiate's mind is left free of emotivity and motivation in the free and easy spaciousness of the natural state of reality. This purpose and outcome, of course, depends not only upon the craft of language but presupposes a ready and willing mentality, a condition that may limit the number of readers who will gain the optimal benefit, for this book is directed at those who already possess an intuition of the nondual nature of mind. Those readers who require an overview of Dzogchen and information about a system of yoga should look elsewhere. Those who seek a philosophical treatise will not only be disappointed but they may be left confused and rejective.

In a wider purview, Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, is Tibet's principal tradition of nondual mysticism, commensurate with the Chinese Taoism of Lao Tzu and the Indian Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya and Ramana Maharshi. Without reference to similar and parallel Tibetan schools of yoga such as Mahamudra and Lamdre, it describes itself as the pinnacle of attainment of the buddhist yogin, yet at the same time it maintains a distance from conventional Buddhism. Moreover, insofar as the ancient Bon school of Tibetan religion traces its own Dzogchen tradition back to its pre-buddhist, shamanic roots, it may be surmised that the vision of Dzogchen is innate in any soteriological culture, or indeed in any human society. If a perfect nondual state of being is the inescapable intrinsic state of all our being, as Longchenpa, the author of *The Treasury of Natural Perfection*, intimates, then we should expect to see traces of that vision around the world in poetry and historical religious literature, which surely is the case. Yet it is the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition that addresses the mood of our Western cultural moment, a time in which we find ourselves enmeshed in egregious materialism and the dichotomies of judeo-christian fundamentalism. At this moment, it is in the lived Tibetan tradition founded upon a mellow oral transmission and a vast library of literary sources—most particularly in the revelations of Longchenpa—that we can find immediate access and inspiration.

Within the Tibetan arena of Dzogchen exegesis, there are many variations on the theme of natural perfection developed over 1200 years. The principal tradition of Dzogchen taught by lamas both in the West and in Tibet today is derived from Jigme Lingpa, an 18th century mystic, an incarnation of Longchenpa and founder of the *Longchen Nyینگtik* tradition. This later-day Dzogchen praxis is embedded in the Vajrayana Nyینگma tradition and at first sight cannot be differentiated from it, and is evidently an integral part of a Central Asian cultural form and lifestyle. The current exigencies of parts of Western societies, and indeed of any community that feels itself on the edge of time, demand an immediate, simple, formless, entry into the authenticity of the natural state of mind, and that is provided by what we may call radical Dzogchen. Here, as analogy, with full confidence that the human body can float in water, rather than extending a timorous toe into the pool, we jump into the deep end and either sink or swim. Knowing that awareness of radiant reality is the natural state of mind, there is no need of an extended preparatory phase, no need to modify lifestyle or moral conditioning; radical Dzogchen requires only an intimation of the nature of mind for a rainbow body to be imminent. The precepts of 'radical' or 'pristine' Dzogchen are contained in the sources of Longchenpa's philosophical poem and commentary.

Basic Assumptions

Although the origins of Dzogchen are lost in a hoary past, it appears to have come to light in the cultural nexus of the valleys of the Hindu Kush in present Pakistan and the contiguous plateau of Western Tibet. This was in the 7th and 8th centuries when the culture of Zhangzhung dominated the area. Here shamanism, Hinduism and Buddhism were mixed, but we assume that the Indic religious ethos permeated the culture. Simplistically stated, the people of this culture believed that living beings are bound to suffering on the wheel of time. Ritual worship and appeasement of the gods may alleviate that suffering and bring relief from capricious fate, and such undoubtedly was the belief of the common people; but for those with a superior karmic destiny the practice of personal moral discipline and social virtue would lead through a series of rebirths to the attainment of liberation from samsara into nirvana, or, in the case of Hindus, release (*moksha*) into union with the godhead. For those with the best karma and with the capacity to practice meditation and techniques of yoga, a path was defined through which the succession of rebirths leading to nirvana could be radically reduced. 'Liberation', synonymous with happiness, whatever the method, is thus the purpose of life. Dzogchen assumes a stance not only outside and beyond the innumerable schools of Buddhism and Hinduism that provide methods of attaining that release, but by default beyond all religious systems whatsoever, including the Judeo-Christian and Muslim, and all secular systems of belief including nihilist, atheist, hedonist and humanist.

Within the context of tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism, which was the dominant form of Buddhism in the area where Dzogchen appeared and which eventually

prevailed in Tibet, types of religious endeavor with final nirvana in mind are classified as eight ‘progressive’ approaches. These vehicles—yogas and lifestyles—include monastic discipline, solitary ascetic retreat, altruistic (bodhisattvic) social involvement, ritual activity to modify the spiritual environment, techniques to alter or transform the state of mind, and meditations and behavior designed to heighten awareness. Although all such religious practices—a different approach for every personality type—are distinguished by varying degrees of subtlety and sophistication, they are all goal-oriented, and as such a conceptual distinction is implicit between what is and what should be, between samsara and nirvana, sentient beings and buddha. Striving to attain a spiritual objective is implied in all these approaches and it is here that Dzogchen defines itself outside the frame of religion and tantra-yoga. Dzogchen stresses the undeniable fact that any goal-oriented conscientious endeavor assumes a result in a future that by definition never comes and thereby precludes attainment in the present moment. Thus there can be no liberation until the drive to attainment is relinquished. In this important sense, every path of religious striving is a dead end and represents a deviation from the natural gnosis of pure mind, ‘the heart of the matter’. ‘Nonaction’ is the salient key term in the evocation of the reality of natural perfection.

Reality—the ‘reality’ that is evoked on every page of Longchenpa’s text—is the light of the mind that shines equally and inescapably in every moment of existence. Much of the difficulty of Dzogchen translation into English arises from the multiplicity of expression, the fine nuance of terminology, employed to evoke this fundamental luminosity. It is the single most important, unique, assumption of Dzogchen that this light is self-existent and self-aware and in fact the sole ingredient of all our experience. This light is the great mystery of nondual mysticism. When we comprehend that Dzogchen is based upon the assumption that all and everything, consciousness and every form of experience, is naturally composed of this light, then we are able to read without let or hindrance the technical exposition of its revelation that allows the light to shine out in all its brilliance. The innate awareness of this pristine nondual brilliance is called *rikpa*, or ‘intrinsic presence’.⁴

The Dzogchen view insists that there is no prescriptive practice in which to engage to attain pure presence, that there is nothing that we can do to induce that view. Dzogchen ‘nonmeditation’ is a spontaneous noncontingent continuity—a timeless synchronicitous awareness. Yet many people enter the arena of Dzogchen by consciously placing themselves within the reach of transmission, and then, receiving an introduction to the nature of mind from a human guru, enter the praxis of the ‘hyper-yogin’, which is called *atyoga* or *Maha Ati*. Identifying the Dzogchen view as the attitude of the hyper-yogin, still there exists a dichotomy between the timeless state of natural perfection and the mind that is bent on divesting itself of temporal and spatial confines. The process through which resolution of this apparent dichotomy is reached can

only be a momentary synchronicitous event, yet in the Tibetan tradition two phases are identified. The first is the mind's spontaneous function of disengagement from sensory and mental objects of attachment and simultaneous self-identity with the light of which they are made. This is called Breakthrough, or Cutting-through (*trekcho*),⁵ into the original purity—or alpha-purity—where natural perfection lies. In the spacious luminosity of alpha-purity there may still be a gap between the mind of the hyper-yogin with its all-suffusing light and this last vestige of self-consciousness, and this is eliminated by the natural flow of nonmeditation upon the brilliance of the light through its apparent nuclear components known as 'holistic nuclei' which may be compared to the pixels of light in a hologram. This phase of hyper-yoga is called Leapover (Jumping-through) (*togal*) and implies entry into the state of spontaneity that belies causality.

The distinction between these two phases of praxis, although prominent in the contemporary mainstream Nyingtik tradition, may appear an invidious invasion of a nonverbal state by an obdurate intellect, and indeed we can only find bare traces of this distinction in *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* (see Canto 122ii). The tendency to consider the difference purely academic and an indication of a concretization of Dzogchen in its recent history, however, is vitiated by the definition of two modes of final resolution. The culmination of Breakthrough is a body of light called a 'rainbow body' which presages corporeal dissolution leaving only hair and fingernails behind. The culmination of Leapover on the contrary is the so-called 'body of great transformation' that betokens visible longevity. To onlookers the first may appear as a dissolution at death, whereas the body of light or great transformation appears as an ongoing corporeal illusion. But again this mythos is a development later than the tantras of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* allow and Longchenpa only makes a distinction between the natural perfection of the here-and-now within a body and the natural perfection of the bardo state, in the process offering a pure vision of death and its aftermath.

Errors and Answers

The Great Perfection does not entail an attitude of boundless optimism, although that is a possible spin-off; it is not a perpetual intellectual perception of a silver lining in each and every experience, although that too is not precluded; it is not an altruistic ambition to save all beings—and the environment—through a positive and loving attitude, although that also may eventuate. Dzogchen provides a deconstructive view that allows automatic access to the spaciousness of the intrinsic complete and perfect reality that is the nature of mind. This lurch from a reliance upon the rational mind to an existential understanding of reality occurs in the light of deep initiatory experience, which is known technically as an introduction to the nature of mind. The praxis of Dzogchen is not an intellectual exercise, despite the evidence of scholarly exegesis in which the intellect mimics and usurps the pre-eminence of

pristine awareness. The intellect is redundant in the momentary insight into every experience of the flow of experience as compassionate emptiness and light. It is therefore an error to assume that one is 'not ready' for Dzogchen because of a lack of study and intellectual preparation

Initiatory experience is present in this very moment and nothing can be done to facilitate its advent. Any kind of preparation or fore-practice muddies the waters in its assumption of a goal to be reached. Access to the clarity and the zing of reality, on the contrary, is more likely to be found in an innocent pristine mind that has not been conditioned by the cultural and religious presumptions of a 'sophisticated' tradition. Purity of karma, putative rebirth, guru-relationship, degree of meditation-concentration, facility in visualization, levels of attainment, and so on, are all issues pertinent to acceptance and success within a hierarchical cult wherein a particular ideal form of social and psychological behavior is a goal to be achieved; but to the formless experience of Dzogchen such considerations have no relevance. Striving in any kind of preparatory endeavor is an exercise in shooting oneself in the foot, or at least running after a mirage. In fact, to reach the point of relaxation in the moment that provides intimation of gnosis, nonaction is the sole precept. This perspective in radical Dzogchen is exclusive to those who have no need or inclination to exchange their inbred cultural norms and mores for those belonging to a more exotic or 'spiritual' tradition, or to reject their cultural legacy and educational conditioning in an effort to change their psychological make-up. Recognition of our lived experience, just as it is, in its miraculous immediacy and beauty, without any yen for change, is the praxis of radical Dzogchen, and belief in personal development and improvement, progress towards a social ideal, moral evolution of the species, and so on, is deviation from the pure pleasure of the unthought timeless moment.

It is an error of interpretation, however, to believe that Dzogchen requires abandonment of religious devotions or ritual practice. The sacred and the profane have the same weight in the Dzogchen view, and the temple or church and the beer-hall or gymnasium are equal. Insofar as the form or shape or color of experience in the moment is immaterial to its potential for transfiguration or recognition of the nature of mind, whatever physical verbal or mental habits prevail in the stream of one's life provide the stuff of buddhahood. Evidently, Dzogchen precepts such as those Longchenpa discloses in *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* are available primarily within the Vajrayana tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and it is to be expected that the majority of Dzogchen yogins and yoginis will have assimilated an intellectual understanding of that tradition, if not a daily practice of meditation, yoga and devotions; but no buddhist conditioning, ritual worship and lifestyle, nor even christian or jewish devotions, provides any more—or less—fertile ground for recognition of the nature of mind than the lifestyle of an agnostic professional, for example, or a self-indulgent hedonist. On the other hand, the recognition of the light of the

mind, the emptiness and clarity of mind, that signals Dzogchen initiation, may loosen attachment to conventional forms and mundane obsessions and habits and galvanize any renunciant tendency.

The here-and-now is the receptacle of the nondual reality that is the matrix of mind where pure presence inevitably fires in the very moment of every experience. If this matrix of intrinsic pure presence sounds like God to some people, then they are definitely on the right track. But the nondual state of pure presence is personified as Samantabhadra, a naked and blue seated buddha, whose name appears in the text as 'the supreme source' and who is the principal interlocutor in one of the seminal and most oft-quoted tantras herein. It would be a mistake, however, to approach 'Samantabhadra' as anything but a label for something that is quite beyond language and symbolism. If we look closely, it appears that this 'God' has no kind of existence or definable attributes whatsoever and can only be spoken of—if at all—in terms of pure presence, luminosity, emptiness and nonduality. For this reason Buddhists with a conformist predilection prefer to call it 'buddha'. Even this is unacceptable in the Dzogchen view. 'Buddha' is primordial cognitive awakening that happens only in a moment of experience of the here-and-now and, therefore, can never be distanced and objectified. It is an egregious mistake to understand 'buddha' or 'the nature of mind' as something infinitely subtle yet indicative of a state that may be attested and attained. Assimilating Samantabhadra's transmission of 'I am nothing at all' pre-empts the error of reification.

To take Longchenpa's exposition of Dzogchen as mere philosophical speculation, it must be emphasized, is a futile error, along with the corollary of mistaking *prima facie* theoretical understanding of the Dzogchen view for existential realization. To the top end of recipients of the Dzogchen transmission, merely by its assimilation, an immediate dissolution of samsaric dichotomy is assured, and whatever validity such a promise entails it indicates the nature of the transmission and the Dzogchen dialectic as a functional tool. Insofar as its language is self-referential, its letters, sounds and meanings always pointing at their luminous, joyful, essence, its dialectic relentlessly and consistently referring back to the unstructured light of pure presence, and insofar as language is inseparable from our experience, we are constantly thrust into the reality that the Dzogchen exposition evokes. Its incessant self-reference, giving not an iota of validity to the perceptual and intellectual functions of our ordinary rational mind, dissolves all concrete points of reference and leaves us in the spaciousness of ineffable being. Its language establishes the recipient of the transmission in the timeless reality beyond linguistic conditioning which we call 'nondual', in a dynamic condition that we call 'nonaction', in a state of consciousness that we call 'pure presence', with a feeling tone we call 'pure pleasure', in an unmotivated space that is 'unconditional compassion'. This self-referential language induces the nonreferential state of natural perfection where causality has ceased to function.

Thus natural perfection implies the immanence of a nonverbal reality and Dzogchen is nothing at all. Far from being an objective philosophical description of the world at large, or a soteriological blueprint, this exposition is a magical psychotropic poem.

More specifically, for the magic of the poem to kick in, it is crucial to understand the text to be what the tantric tradition terms 'definitive', as opposed to 'provisional'. There is no time lag between the momentary perception of the words of the poem and its consummation. We are not instructed to change our evil ways, to cultivate virtue and forsake vice, to do a hundred thousand prostrations, or to persevere in contrived meditations. On the contrary the imperative voice is rarely used and when infrequently it appears we are told simply to relax, to let go and let it all be, and even in such formulations the advice is not actually prescriptive but descriptive of the moment (although grammatical forms may indicate otherwise). Any tendency to interpret the Dzogchen precepts as a consummation to strive for is an indication of misunderstanding. The precept 'nonaction', for example, if taken literally may precipitate the undiscerning reader into a state of couch-potato indolence rather than allowing the magic of the Dzogchen dialectic to dissolve all motivation—including the tendency to idleness—allowing dynamic spontaneity to prevail. Likewise, the precept 'nonaction' should not be understood as cause to cease and desist in any discipline whatsoever, particularly on the progressive paths of spiritual aspiration, although the habit of the rational mind demanding the identification of a cause reliably efficient in producing an effect through time will be detected there. The Dzogchen transmission taken as the cause of some future benefit indicates a mind at work at the lower end of the spectrum of its recipients.

Moreover, it is a dangerous error to interpret the precept 'nondiscrimination' as license to indulge the peculiar personal weirdnesses that genetic and personal karma engender. *In the moment, in the here-and-now*, the originally pure mind of natural perfection makes no discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad, high and low, and between the poles of any dichotomy that social conditioning and intellectual idealism have inculcated, and it gives no positive reaction to the good nor any denial of the bad. Acceptance of the totality of human potential may expand to infinity the horizons of our experience, but if the self-serving rational mind takes hold of the notion that all and everything is permitted and uses it as a principle to act upon through time, then the expectation that karma will perform its worst will not be disappointed. Karma may not exist in the timeless moment of nondual awareness, but it is certainly lethal in the credulous rational mind in which a frame of moral conditioning is taken to be incontrovertible and in which moral causality is operative.

As to the charge of antinomianism—a disdain for moral law, where the atavistic maxim 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' is elevated to sacred dogma—in Dzogchen evidently it is a nonstarter. In the mind of natural

perfection, certainly, moral discrimination and moral causality do not exist, yet what remains is nondual 'bodhichitta', both the ground and the emanation of pure mind, which can only ever be pure vision and perfect conduct. What begins as pure mind exists and ends as pure mind. Here, bodhichitta, which in Dzogchen means the pure mind of nondual perception, reasserts its mahayana definition of compassion. Here and now compassion is all. It is true that in the progressive left-handed, *yogini* path of tantra-yoga antinomian principles may be employed to induce intimation of the nature of mind and as skillful means to eradicate intractable mental habits—but that is another story, a tantric story. In Dzogchen, 'taking the position of consequence' (as Yogi Chen would have it), there is no fall from grace, and there never has been a fall, and in the realization of that reality where the golden age lies just beneath an insubstantial, fragile surface of dualistic belief, any moral dualism becomes the problem rather than the solution. Judeo-christian dualism served—and continues to serve—the Roman empire and its successors as a method of taming the barbarians; but it becomes morally and existentially oppressive when the natural perfection of being becomes gloriously evident as in the 'sixties' efflorescence of soteriological consciousness.

The insecure mind that relies upon religious dogma and moral dualism will feel threatened by these ethical considerations, and tightening up it may become unreceptive to Longchenpa's sublime poem. Everyone who partakes of a moment of awareness in the here-and-now, everyone without exception is a candidate for the revelation of natural perfection because Dzogchen is all-inclusive by definition; but it is a mistake to believe that Dzogchen, open to all, is accessible to all. If it were so, then the samsaric world would have vanished long ago. 'Secret' Tibetan texts such as Longchenpa's are useful only to those people whose time has come. To most others—perhaps less so in Tibetan society than others—although the words are familiar, the choice and order of the words are incomprehensible. Those whose faith has been placed in a goal-oriented progressive path will find their receptivity occluded by a rejective emotional response induced by attachment to investment of time and energy in a dogmatic sadhana and devotion to a personal mentor. Some will be unable to approach due to socially conditioned blockage, for many in Tibetan society consider Dzogchen heterodox and hazardous, and in Western society the Church's historical condemnation and persecution of nondual mysticism has been unremitting and unforgiving. Others will be unable to accept a human guru as the mouthpiece of Samantabhadra. The majority will be so caught up with the concerns and affairs of this life, with love and social acceptance, with profit and shopping, that they have no time for Dzogchen. Thus the candidates for Dzogchen transmission are few and far between and an aspect of Dzogchen's 'self-secrecy', its natural hermetic character, is disclosed. In pre-revolutionary Tibet, to this natural protection was added a veil of secrecy contrived by a self-protective priesthood, the custodians of the wish-fulfilling gem; in its transmission to the West many teachers have forsaken the old

conventions, and in order to serve the spiritual thirst and fill the spiritual vacuum left there by a moribund religious establishment take the risk of teaching Dzogchen openly.

In Western society the message of Dzogchen may come as a relief particularly to those who feel that much of Vajrayana Buddhism is culturally alien, or that the cultishness of Lamaism is akin to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, or that the great gains of the Protestant Reformation and the move towards nondogmatic humanism seem to have been thrown away in a fascination for oriental ritualism and dogma, or that the distinction between Buddhism and Christianity rests on fashionable conceits. It is an error, however, to believe that Dzogchen can be taken ready-made from a book (see Canto 24). A cogent semantic or poetic statement of Dzogchen—any of Longchenpa's innumerable verses of precept—has the potency to induce an incipient realization of natural perfection; but lacking a contextualizing lineal tradition and a mentor and exemplar who can assist in short-circuiting rationalistic mental habits, it is likely to fast fade. It is the personal mentor speaking in the final stanzas of the text:

*So stay where you are, you lucky people,
Let go and be happy in the natural state.
Let your complicated life and everyday confusion alone
And in quietude, doing nothing, watch the nature of mind.*

*This piece of advice is true and sincere:
Fully engage in contemplation and understanding is born;
Cherish nonattachment and delusion dissolves;
And forming no agenda at all reality dawns.*

*Whatever occurs, whatever it may be, that itself is the key,
And without stopping it or nourishing it, in an even flow,
Freely resting, surrendering to ultimate contemplation,
And in naked pristine purity we reach consummation.*

The Origins of the Text and its Structure

According to the Buddhist Dzogchen tradition, the root guru, *adiguru*, of Dzogchen, Garab Dorje, received the 1,084,000 verses of Dzogchen scriptural poetry from the visionary being Vajrasattva whose embodiment he was. Everything relevant to the Dzogchen view was exhaustively composed in those verses that Garab Dorje was heir to and nothing can be added to that; the multitude of commentators' work simply represents the old truths in contemporary language and in an order appropriate to the needs and priorities of the time. It is the opinion of contemporary Western scholars that Garab Dorje lived in the 7th century in the Swat Valley (or thereabouts), presently in Pakistan, ironically now a base of the Muslim fundamentalist Taliban. Garab Dorje's verses, orally transmitted, were finally written down as the Nyingma

tantras in the Indic languages of the region and then translated into the Tibetan language by the 8th masters such as Bairotsana and Vimalamitra. Insofar as Tibetan is the only language that we know of in which written Dzogchen is extant, to all intents and purposes Dzogchen is the prerogative of Tibet and Tibet may be considered its origin and its home.

Fourteenth century Tibet saw a renaissance of the Nyingma School, the tradition of the Ancients, which was the medium and protector of Dzogchen and its scriptures, and it also saw the birth of Longchen Rabjampa Drimé Wozer. Longchenpa lived with and traveled with the great masters of his age, later spending years in the snow-line hermitages of Central Tibet. Not only was he a yogin and master of Dzogchen but out of his own realization and vast learning he revealed a synthesis of Dzogchen in a series of literary masterpieces that made him a nexus of the tradition upon which subsequent generations were to depend. Perhaps the greatest composition of Tibet's greatest literary mystic and master of prose is *The Treasury of Natural Perfection*, which has remained the best known and most renowned exposition of the Dzogchen view and Dzogchen dialectic until the present day. The treatise as the matrix of ineffability demonstrates the mystery of language; it is the immutable here-and-now as the source and scene of our linguistically created reality, a field of mystery that cannot be described but only felt and inhabited. The very name Longchenpa, suggests that the author was someone who made this cosmic matrix his home.

The Treasury of Natural Perfection is the title of only the 127 root verses of this work. These root verses are derived from the ethos of the Nyingma tantras and restated in Longchenpa's immaculate verse and prose. In his auto-commentary to this seminal work, which comprises the bulk of this translation, he provides the specific tantric sources of his inspiration. Long after Longchenpa passed away the Nyingma tantras were collected into the large compendium of seminal Nyingma texts called *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* (*Nyingma Gyuebum*). His sources are identified in the annotation to the translation and a list is appended. Some sources remain unlocated and may have been casualties of the Chinese cultural revolution.

The auto-commentary to *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* begins with a prologue (Cantos 1-3) in which the essence of the work is laid bare. The first canto, under the heading of Vajra-Homage, evokes the quintessence of Dzogchen, and shows the method of self-referential language. The second canto reveals Longchenpa's purpose, which is nothing less than to induce, experientially, the natural state of pure presence in the minds of his readers. He has high expectations, however, of only the brightest of minds; the rest can familiarize themselves with the principles so that pure presence can be arrived at with greater facility at a later date. The third canto, called 'The Concise Exposition' provides a powerful poetic presentation of Dzogchen that constitutes an introduction to the nature of mind and thus to nondual pure presence itself.

That should be adequate to Longchenpa's purpose, but in the event of malfunction the 'Extensive Exposition' follows.

The body of the text comprises four themes—absence, openness, spontaneity and unity—all of equal weight, each providing a complete description of, and by default, access to, buddhahood. The four themes are the SAMAYA-commitments of Dzogchen, aspects of reality that are intrinsic to our everyday experience and which are naturally observed through our participation in being. It is easy to lose sight of this principal meaning while engaged in the subtleties of the text. Although equality of value is maintained between them in the exposition, as Longchenpa admits and as is evident in the increasing complexity and paradoxical method of his argument, absence forms the basis of a leap into nonduality, openness and spontaneity define the method, and unity is the consummation.

In this regard, there is an important structural division implicit in the work that is not treated by Longchenpa. This neglect may be due to the lack of any strong formulated tradition of Breakthrough and Leapover in 14th century Tibet, although the involuntary 'carefree contemplations' (*chojak*), the visions of diminishing substantiality (*nangwa zhi*) and the windows into the nature of mind (*semdzin*) are present in germinal form. It may be useful, however, to consider the division of the four themes as two pairs, the first pair, absence and openness, treating Breakthrough, and the second pair, spontaneity and unity, treating Leapover. In short, the first focuses upon the alpha-purity of all experience while the second treats its spontaneous manifestation as light. These two may usefully be distinguished by the characterization of their culmination as either a 'rainbow body' or 'the body of transformation'.

Each of the four SAMAYA themes is divided into four sections—disclosure, assimilation, the bind, and resolution—again each constituting a discrete exposition of a facet of the particular theme. Yet therein development can be traced in the progress from the disclosure of the nature of the theme, through the description of the manner in which experience is instantaneously integrated and bound to reality, to the finality of resolution. If it were not for Dzogchen's denial of the applicability of the traditional four descriptive categories of every approach to reality, the first section could be characterized as view, the second as meditation, the third as conduct and the last as fruition.

There is a fifth theme, unmentioned by Longchenpa in his description of the structure of the text (in Canto 3), entitled 'Advice to Recipients of the Transmission'. This theme may be viewed as an addendum, placing the Dzogchen teachings in the context of the mainstream Vajrayana tradition, particularly of the *Longchen Nyengtik*, and within the Tibetan cultural context. At the end of Canto 122, however, this theme is described as 'the key to the four storey treasury' of the four SAMAYA-commitments and Canto 122 certainly provides an extraordinary epitome of the Breakthrough and Leapover precepts,

yet with a different didactic slant, as if it had been orally delivered, whereas the foregoing was a literary composition. We have no information about the history of the text, how or when it was compiled, or by whom.

In its entirety, the auto-commentary to *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* consists of 127 chapters, which in deference to the poetic nature of the content—at least in the original Tibetan and despite the disparate elements that compose each chapter—we have called cantos. The title of each canto indicates the topic that it treats and in translation is a pithy summary of Longchenpa's introductory sentence. The root verse, composed by Longchenpa in his root text, then follows. A few sentences of prose commentary elucidate the meaning of the root verse, which is then illustrated by quotations from the Nyingma tantras interspersed with sentences of commentary. The identity of the tantras from which the quotations are derived evinces fulfilment of the promise in the title of the auto-commentary to elucidate the meaning of the three series of Dzogchen instruction—Mind, Space and Secret Precept—which subsume the entire body of Dzogchen texts and precepts. (Appendix I of *Old Man*, 'The Tibetan Text and Quotations', categorizes the source tantras according to these three series.)

Regarding the classification called 'the three series', Garab Dorje's heart-son, Manjushrimitra (Jampel Shenyen), categorized the innumerable precepts gathered by his teacher into three classes—Mind (pure mind or bodhichitta), Space and Secret Precepts. The Tibetan literature gives great importance to Manjushrimitra's classification revealed particularly in the structure of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*, yet beyond some variations in vocabulary any more profound distinction is difficult to discern. Some seemingly contrived didactic analysis may, however, be useful.

The Three Series can be associated with the three incisive precepts of Garab Dorje, for example: the Mind Series as introduction to the nature of mind; the Space Series providing conviction in the praxis and the Secret Precept Series to confidence in release. Dudjom Rinpoche associates each of the three series with a psychological type: the Mind Series for those who abide in the mind, the Space Series for those who are free of activity, and the Secret Precept series for those intent upon the innermost essence. That is in accord with Manjushrimitra's professed criteria which emphasized 'presence of mind', 'nonaction' and 'the crucial point' respectively. A Bon analysis recommends that the Mind Series cultivates clarity, the Space Series cultivates emptiness and the Secret Precept Series cultivates both appearances and emptiness equally.⁶ It seems probable, however, that the three series were derived from three discrete lineages with slightly variant approaches, or that they represent three layers of temporal presentation. Anyway, Longchenpa avers that the meaning of these three series is contained within the four themes, and finding no evidence of it in the structure of the text nor any allusion to them, we must assume that the meaning he refers to is a synthesis, or a distillation, of Dzogchen.

At the end of the work, Longchenpa refers to a further set of categories, under which all Dzogchen precepts, like the three series, may be subsumed, and this is the categorization of the nine matrixes (listed in Canto 126). It would seem to be an impossible task to place the verses from *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* within these nine categories according to the subtle distinction of existential exegesis indicated by the nine matrices of the here-and-now, and again we assume that the four themes subsume the ninefold distinction.

The translator's commentary elucidating technical terms and sometimes providing another cultural context for aspects of the Dzogchen view is appended where necessary to each canto, appearing in diminishing quantity in the latter themes.

The title of the Kathmandu Edition of the book, *Old Man Basking in the Sun*, is taken from Canto 20. *Natural Perfection* is the title of the American Edition.

The Translation

The difficulties of translation of the technical Dzogchen terminology are immediately apparent. To avoid strings of turgid jargon that have tended to become the hallmark of such works we have attempted to make the translation interpretive and literary without losing any grammatical force or technical meaning. In this regard although we have appropriated a few technical terms, we have resisted the temptation to employ a vocabulary derived from quantum physics where scientific theory appears to intersect the thrust of Dzogchen's meaning. Some readers may consider that the motivation adhering to any scientific formulation is so at odds with the ethos of Dzogchen that its evocation inevitably inhibits the mind's receptivity to the Dzogchen view.

The difficulty of translating the one single term that distinguishes Dzogchen texts, the word *rikpa*, has yet to be fully resolved. It is tempting to use the Tibetan word itself, but '*rikpa*' lacks any connotation for the English reader and provides no adjectival form. Insofar as *rikpa* denotes both cognitive and ontological aspects of nondual reality, establishing the intrinsic cognitive nature of all experience, mere 'awareness' is inadequate; 'knowledge' is an option yet its primary current denotation is the horrible 'data'; and 'presence' or 'pure presence' has been usefully employed, but the word 'presence' is unable to hold the weight of the meaning of reality. If *rikpa* is to be defined at all, it is brilliant radiance, a constant experience of pure pleasure, lightness and clarity, the soft silence in every moment. The apposite English equivalent has yet to emerge. (In the original published translation I used the word 'gnosis', a strong word of Greek extraction with a long history in christian mysticism, which brushed off and refurbished, through usage we thought could help to assimilate this sublime Central Asian mysticism into post-christian culture—I have now rejected this option and use 'pure' or 'intrinsic' 'presence').

As praxis, *The Treasury of Natural Perfection* may be understood as a transmission of the realization of all phenomena, all experience, as light, light being the common factor of cognition and the intrinsic spaciousness of experience. The three words 'brilliance', 'radiance' and 'clarity' have been used as synonyms of 'light'. Emptiness is the essence of things, light is their nature and compassion is the medium of indeterminate manifestation. Rest in the nature of being and we understand ourselves as beings of empty light in which the three existential dimensions or buddha-bodies manifest spontaneously as a unitary nondual envisionment of outside and inside, a momentary luminous gestalt. The totality of this nondual vision is light. The Newtonian universe of matter and energy is light. We know it through the light of the mind—our prosaic everyday experience is light—and insofar as the field of light is unitary, complete and all-inclusive, it is natural perfection. We know it through its absence, openness, spontaneity and unity.

The 'cauldron' or 'crucible' of the here-and-now is both the vast expanse and a point-instant of that nondual vision which we have called the 'matrix'. Its unstructured nature that is pure mind is boundless extension; a total perspective knowing no center or circumference, without spatial or temporal distinction, with no limitation, fragmentation or partiality, without gaps, lacunae, fissures or interruptions. It never materializes or crystalizes as anything at all, but remains an unimpeded natural flow of light. The matrix describes the totality of a moment in the nonspatial, atemporal here-and-now and so contains the 'dynamic' that is the all-inclusive mind of Samantabhadra and that dynamic, without intent or movement, is denominated 'contemplation'—the nonmeditative contemplation that is the natural state of all our minds, to which we are bound through the natural SAMAYA-commitments of absence, openness, spontaneity and unity.

The Radical Dzogchen of the Vajra-Heart: Spaciousness

This famous seminal text of radical Dzogchen, *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*, the *Choyingdzö*, provides a profound yet simple poetic statement of how it is to immerse oneself in the matrix of the now, to allow pure presence and recognize buddha. It is a personal statement of a yogin-adept who, evidently, has passed through the throes of transfiguration. Certainly the magic of his poetry impresses us that way and surely this is a personal revelation of the consummation of Dzogchen. In it we are assured that over and above all the yogas and dhyanas of Hindustan, all the ritual and magic of Tibet, and all the commercialized quasi-religious new-age therapies of the West, there exists a simple, timeless manner of being, of easy access, requiring no onerous technique or renunciate lifestyle, that can give us a constant modicum of satisfaction in this vale of tears between birth and dying.

This magnum opus of Longchen Rabjampa is a textbook of what has become known as radical Dzogchen, so called in distinction to latter-day elaborated Dzogchen. It is a root text of those who have come up through the ranks of buddhist practice, and that includes most Tibetans who are familiar with it and most westerners who have prior meditation experience on the graduated path. Even more so it is a textbook for those who have encountered Buddhism at this its apex point through the instruction of those few lamas who promote Dzogchen distinct from its buddhist context or who have had personal, initiatory experience outside any institutional frame. Its clarity in pointing out the natural great perfection is unsurpassed. Its absence of pedantry and didacticism and its fullness of poetic diction make it a paean of personal revelation, a naked revelation of a buddha-yogin-cum-poet.

The Tibetan Vajrayana buddhist arena historically is riven in a multitude of ways. Between the four schools, for instance, and between the old and new propagations, between monastic and lay practitioners, between the shaman and the reformist, between central and eastern provinces, and not least in significance is the gap between monastic academics and lay yogins. To appreciate these two extremes of life-style and attitude compare Je Tsongkhapa, the renowned Geluk literary exponent of the monastic reformist tradition, with Drukpa Kunley, the wandering buddhist sadhu (*ngakpa*), minstrel, magician, philanderer—and Dzogchen adept and poet. No love is lost between these two modes of spiritual exemplar, a tendency that has carried over to the West, where both Tibetan and, particularly, some western academics pour militant scorn upon their experientially inspired, more demonstrative and less intellectual

brothers. The monks who were the butt of his teaching-jokes basted Drukpa Kunley. Of course, academics talk while yogins walk the dharma, and academics extol and cultivate the very faculty that Dzogchen yogins seek to deflate and mitigate. Arrogance is the natural corollary of intellectual accomplishment, while humility arises automatically in the adept's mind through his unfurnished lifestyle. But as Dudjom Rinpoche famously warned, the Dzogchen adept must be ever alert to the danger of attachment to alcohol and copulation.

That academics as well as yogi-adepts have enormously enriched Tibetan culture is indisputable. What needs to be stressed is that the peak of Vajrayana exposition is revealed where yoga as existential accomplishment and literary exposition as poetry coincide. This middle way place, halfway between monastery and chung-house-cum-brothel, is the hermitage, not so much a place of rigorous ascetic discipline as a place of spiritual freedom. Here we can find the finest analytic and expressive minds and the very broad and profound all-inclusive view incorporated in the single embodiment that is buddha. Saraha exalted the tradition in India; Milarepa was buddha, a Tibetan of the Himalayan littoral; another—and in the Dzogchen tradition the finest—was Longchenpa. *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* is the most explicit and keenest of the poetic expositions of his own experience of Dzogchen atiyoga. He himself stresses the personal nature of what he describes. The real Dzogchen experience is beyond description and expression; what he writes is of course a personal elaboration.

This all-inclusive view that is the reality of radical Dzogchen is not dependent upon any religious culture, although the priests of the Buddhist and Bon religions of Tibet have been the custodians and occasional exemplars of it. For that we owe them an enormous debt of gratitude, which is now being repaid by patrons and disciples in the dharma centers throughout the world, and an even greater debt for investing us in the West in their vital tradition, repaid by our recognition of the nature of mind. But radical Dzogchen is, after all, as the tradition affirms, what we have always known. We know the inimitable truth of being, as do all human beings who listen at their deep heart's core and at the same time open their eyes to what is there in front of their faces. We know it in the same way that we know the pulsing of the blood in our veins and the touch of the inbreath and the outbreath on our nostrils. The truth of Dzogchen is the legacy of being human. But judeo-christian theism and Manichean dualism have persistently obstructed such direct knowledge, nondualism proscribed as heretical, and christian culture has never been able to articulate it sufficiently to create an integral lineal tradition, either covert or secular. Nevertheless, the nondual reality of Dzogchen shines through European literature and poetry by other means. It is evident in popular culture—or is it most particularly evident in pop culture?—and the truth dawns that it is the life-blood of all culture in all cultures. By virtue of the counter-cultural revolution of the sixties, moreover, insofar as the communal mind was opened and made receptive to the profound blast of radical Dzogchen, today we have

access to texts such as those of Longchenpa, each containing an identical vision, like pixels in a hologram, that simultaneously mirror and irradiate disparate visions in the minds of innumerable people around the world.

The yoga of the vajra-heart, Maha Ati, the apex path, is not part of the ninefold schema of progressive Nyingma Buddhism and yet it infuses all nine aspects. Longchenpa introduces it as an ultimately transcendent view that lies outside the narrative of the nine paths and outside the conventional frame that includes atiyoga. In so doing he provides a rationale for the perception of Dzogchen independent of its buddhist context, a separable and discrete discipline. Such a perspective is key to the radical Dzogchen view; the recognition of the nature of mind is predicated upon the introduction from a master, whether he is a Buddhist or Bon rikzin-lama, and regardless of his religious faith or whether indeed he is of a religious or secular disposition. On the other hand, in some cantos within this poem, Longchenpa appears to identify the apex view with atiyoga, the ninth path. The distinction here is to be made between instantaneous Dzogchen perceived as simultaneous starting point and destination, wherein no gradation within a space-time frame can be admitted, and Dzogchen as a short—momentary—path, a doorway into the nature of mind in space-time.

At its essence atiyoga may be conceived as either *trekcho* or *togal*, the two slightly differing facets of Dzogchen. The question whether the apex view is identical to the *trekcho* and *togal* views is one of those false questions posed by the intellect as a last defense against ego-loss. If this question prepossesses us, we need to fall back into the spaciousness of the thought and allow the nonduality of nonaction to reassert itself. If the intellect, rejecting that response as a placebo, insists on a rational answer to the question ‘Why?’ when the Dzogchen view insists that there is nothing to do, do we need to engage with the techniques of *trekcho* and *togal*? Again the answer is ‘nonaction’. But what, then, of the outer and the inner preliminary practices and the *trekcho* and *togal* nonmeditations? What of the formulations of the view under which *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* could be subsumed? Yes, the vajra-heart is the immediate recourse of those who, like the great garuda bird, spread their wings upon hatching, take off into the azure sky and never look back. Atiyoga, conversely, is the treasury of concepts and meta-psychological modalities that are the wide-open doorways to serendipitous integration. In order to fall into the self-sprung understanding that the distinction between relative and absolute is purely intellectual and delusive, there must be a concept, a doorway, that is understood as nondual. That concept, and others denominated by its synonyms, is understood as a doorway into nonduality. The experience of walking through the door is like opening a door to the outside and allowing the air outside to merge with the air inside. While having the eyes open and looking, it is the experience of suddenly seeing. While dreaming, it is the sudden recognition that we are dreaming. So long as these exercises and concepts are considered

functions of nonaction and thus doorways into the nondual, we remain in the realm of radical Dzogchen. The moment that any technique is conceived as a method providing a cause or condition for the realization of the natural state of mind, we enter the progressive, gradualist—cultural—path that is usually taught by the lineal protagonists of latter-day Dzogchen to those they believe cannot comprehend the rigorous precepts of radical Dzogchen.

Longchenpa himself is indeed sitting in the cockpit of the vajra-heart, sitting astride the great garuda, and presenting the apex view as the only ultimately valid perspective, but he has practiced all the nine approaches to which the Nyingma tradition subscribes. He calls them ‘lesser’ or ‘lower’ because the practitioners of those paths are caught up in the form—view, meditation technique and lifestyle—of those disciplines and thus nurse themselves into a purgatory of limitations where they can only await the ultimate, synchronicous transmission. The nine buddhist paths are succinct metaphors designed for various embodied mindsets to gradually (or in the case of the ninth path immediately) extricate themselves from the delusion of being separate entities. Thus, they are only relatively valid, and valid most particularly where buddhist cultural mores and buddhist tradition mold the culture, especially in the tantric context where lifestyle, culture and meditation are inextricably entangled and least valid where assumptions about the nature of reality are not derived from Hindu mysticism. In the West, we may winnow the chaff of oriental buddhist culture until we have an essence of Theravada monastic praxis, for example, or bodhisattva householder morality, but buddhist monasteries and buddhist monks stick out like sore thumbs in our post-christian culture. For these reasons, if the reader lives enmeshed in a football-and-beer culture he need not trouble himself about the occasional comment in Longchenpa’s text alluding to the nine lower approaches. Unless there is timorousness in the face of the essential spaciousness or emptiness of the cultural charade, we do not need kind and sympathetic, gradualist, buddhist culture in order to enter the Dzogchen mandala. And for these reasons, however, the core vitality of Buddhism—the Dzogchen—remains sequestered, the prerogative of scholars playing semantic games and academic one-upmanship.

In order to reach the plane where there is no ladder of spirituality to climb and no pyramid of meditational accomplishment to hold us in awe, we need to be free of the notion that we can fall to a lower level of existential cognizance or rise to any higher state. Only then can we relax into the all-embracing matrix of the now. Culturally based practices produce progressive cultural accomplishment. The nature of mind abhors structures of any kind, says Longchenpa, but particularly, he might add, those that are constructed through ambition, competition and contention reinforcing the sense of self. Thus it is tempting to believe that when Longchenpa was alive, in the fourteenth century, the phases of recognition of mind’s nature to which the terms *‘trekcho’* and *‘toga’* refer were still aspects of the same unitary noncausal Dzogchen atiyoga praxis.

It appears that by the eighteenth century the gradualists had come to dominate the Nyingma School overtly, no doubt strongly influenced by the Gelukpa establishment in Lhasa. Thereafter, *trekcho* and *togal* were the highest two rungs on a Dzogchen ladder. Both latter-day dominant lineages carrying Dzogchen transmission—the *Longchen Nyintiké* and *Kunzang Gongpa Zangtal* traditions—demonstrate this. Although the vajra-heart was still beating fast, the cultural, relativist aspect was dominant. Here in *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*, a textbook of radical Dzogchen, the single use of each term—*trekcho* and *togal*—clearly defines their original meanings as aspects of an identical experience. Trekcho is the phase or aspect of the resolution of duality where the luminous mind shines through as alpha-purity, as primordial awareness. Togal is the phase or aspect of the same resolution where that same luminous mind is perceived in a unitary experience of spontaneously arising phenomena. The proposition that *trekcho* necessarily precedes *togal* merely shows the intellectual propensity that enforces causal interconnection. Or perhaps the canard of causal succession arose when *trekcho* and *togal* became associated with different practices in the process of developing gradualism, where preliminary exercises were connected to *trekcho*. Thus instead of relating like two sides of the same coin, *trekcho* and *togal* flowed one after the other in the gradualist practitioner's process as basic practice and fruition, as cause and effect.

It is sometimes asserted that specifically *trekcho* praxis develops the empty aspect of reality experientially, while *togal* practices develop the form, and in exposition of the progressive path this distinction seems to be generally accepted. Yet the intellect that separated *trekcho* and *togal* is the same faculty that is now separating emptiness and appearances. Is it beneficial to assume that these two can be separated in any way—existentially—in the now? Is it useful to conceive of successive development of the poles of this dualism? To develop one is of course to develop the other, and anyway what is this notion of development? Is Dzogchen a progressive, graduated path after all? Might there be benefit in polishing or upgrading the ego? In the vajra-heart we have left all concepts of a spiritual path and spiritual praxis behind. Indeed radical Dzogchen can be distinguished by its separation from all goal-orientated practices and that includes, particularly, the eight lower of the nine approaches of the Nyingma system. Strictly, the radical Dzogchen path is a formless path and, therefore, may be called a pathless path. As direct experience of a unified field it is the prerogative of an elite—but not an intellectual elite. On the contrary, insofar as our culture tends to reward those with acutely rational intellects, even more so than in the past, a tendency towards enshrining intellectual dialectics enthralls us, and that is impossible in radical Dzogchen, because the *trekcho* practices have undermined causality. If intellectual arrogance raises its ugly head, it is the demonic head of ego assuming that there is a goal, near or far, that needs to be accomplished and that there is a technique, the prerogative of superior intellect, that can accomplish it.

What is crucial in this vajra-heart scenario? What is the key to pure presence? The crux is the place where dualities are resolved, where mind is never distracted or drawn out; it has no motivation and remains in its natural disposition, transcending all goal-orientation. At that place lies the crucial recognition of intrinsic spaciousness itself; resting therein, whatever arises naturally subsides, vanishing, released just as it is, without effort. Afflictive emotion, karma and habitual propensities, and even methods of improvement on the path of liberation, arise as illusory magical display from creativity; everything arises in the now as a display of creativity and it is only recognized just as it is without any modification. No matter what situation arises, we do not engage in it in order to improve it or to try to suppress it, for the key to pure presence is freely resting in our natural disposition. Thus nonaction is the key and the crux. In the Dzogchen view nonaction is recognized as noncausality, nonduality, unitary sameness, indivisibility and immediacy. If we gain familiarity with the luminous essence—the luminous spontaneity of things—through the key precept of nonstriving and effortlessness, buddha in the now is buddha reawakened. It is the actuality of the peerless vajra-heart—the essence of the ninefold path that is the luminous supermatrix. Since phantasmagoria is self-releasing, reality is consummate Dzogchen, and unremitting, invariable spontaneity is the crux of this excellent counsel of Longchenpa.

Dzogchen surely has a life independent of Buddhism, but the truth of Sakyamuni's fundamental insights often shines through the precepts of Dzogchen's radical existentialism. Each stanza of *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* may be considered a precept, or a nest of precepts, and in the satisfaction of unpacking them buddhist sutric insights are renewed. Giving attention for the duration of an experience of pure presence (*riḱpa*), for example, lost in the awareness of the constant flux inherent in the natural reality of spontaneity, the notion of 'impermanence' becomes experiential. What appears to have some permanence, however, persists for a period not just shorter in duration than a fraction of a nanosecond, but for no extension in time whatsoever. Further, impermanence is connoted in the adjective 'self-sprung' when it qualifies 'pristine awareness'. The indulgent associations of 'continuum' are only allowed in 'the continuum of discursive opinion', for example, and also regarding the process of constant change when objects deflate instantaneously, dissolving in nonmeditation. The ephemeral nature of reality is best experienced simply by dwelling in the now; realization of the transitory nature of the illusion that fills experience is thus burnt indelibly into consciousness. Then 'signlessness', one of the three doors to liberation, central to sutric Buddhism, is an attribute of Dzogchen experience emphasized and reiterated in *treḱcho*—although it is emphasized less in *togal* where discovery of evidence of pure presence in the visual field is paramount. Then, 'selflessness' likewise is implicit in the Dzogchen view, although it is rarely overtly stated as such unless the repetition of 'apparent but nonexistent', usually referring to the objective illusion of

something insubstantial, is construed as an affirmation of the nonexistence of any subjective self. We gain an impression throughout *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* that Longchenpa's witness has long retired.

Whereas the perspective on reality presented by the various buddhist paths and meditations (excluding Dzogchen) stimulates the motivation to strive on the path of moral and cognitive purification, it is imperative to understand that this poem is in no way a prescription upon which to act. It describes 'what is' on a very deep existential level and thus provokes recognition of that 'reality'. To believe what is being evoked is a higher, better, state of being than what we have now and, therefore, something that we should espouse and commit ourselves to and work towards, is to make self-abuse the purpose and basis of the Dzogchen view. Self-improvement and transformation are the trademarks of buddhist tantra (Vajrayana); the Dzogchen view to the contrary implies reflexive recognition of the spaciousness of the timeless moment. The satisfaction that we may receive from visualizing the actuality of spaciousness and the nondual vision, to allow the intellect to turn it into a kind of existential delicacy that we may feast on occasionally if we do the correct ritual and liturgical oblation, is a self-defeating obstruction. On the treadmill of goal-orientation, inevitably our gold is transmuted into lead, or, rather, inexorably the gold dust in the palm of the hand trickles through the fingers and vanishes on the breeze. The guru-vision cannot become a goal or technique; if it becomes obsessive it reinforces the neurosis that is creating the pain and anxiety. Either we recognize the now outside of time or no recognition is possible. Either we recognize the nature of mind or we are left with just an intellectual reflection, a representation or repackaging of direct perception.

For many and various reasons it is crucial to understand that this poem is not a philosophical treatise. If philosophy is the theoretical study of knowledge and existence, Dzogchen is not a philosophy since Dzogchen is preeminently experiential. If philosophy is a love of wisdom for its own sake, again that is not Dzogchen, but more of an indulgence in the realm of pure form where we can take uninhibited pleasure in appreciation of abstract relations as in mathematics or music. In that space we would take pleasure in the complex and radical patterns of thought that create an existential net across the universe. Dzogchen is not another buddhist blueprint for the understanding of the relative mind, part of a metapsychology that can optimize human potential or cure humanity of its ills. Nor does it provide a route to power and manipulation of other beings, nor power and technology to control the external world. Those who study Dzogchen as an academic discipline are like fearful nestlings looking over the edge of the nest aware that their wings still lack strength. Or perhaps they resemble fish pulled in on a line and having lost the ocean that is their natural medium are left to thrash about in the bottom of the boat. To treat Dzogchen like an integrated philosophy or a subject of study and analysis is to demonstrate ignorance that the Dzogchen view is a nondual view, the unity of

the subject/object dichotomy; that there can be no dogma, doctrine or set practice in radical Dzogchen; that an analytical, intellectual approach adds sand to the tank that was to provide the fuel for the journey; that it hardens the arteries whose pliability and elasticity was our best hope for extra vitality. On the contrary Dzogchen is a yoga—the ultimate yoga—that provides, simply, the keys to authentic being.

Since Dzogchen is neither a philosophy nor a subject for academic analysis or comparison, we may eschew academic language and get rid of the diction that makes it appear sophistic. To translate what in Tibetan is understood as reality by the phrase ‘the true nature of phenomena’, for example, is like taking a musty piece of archaic painted pottery out of a museum and using it to serve wine at a contemporary cocktail party. We do not need to brush off dignified and pretentious phrases from the history of buddhist philosophy in order to describe the reality of being here and now. The alternative of course is to create a new language, a language of existential poetry. The structure and vocabulary of the language should itself reflect the nuance of its message—like haiku or koan or the siddhas’ dohas. This is not so much a paean in praise of the style of this present translation but rather a statement of intent and a plea for Dzogchen translators of a new generation to get out of the rut of classical buddhist diction.

Furthermore, Dzogchen is not a religion. The rites that are performed by Dzogchen communities are the legacy of the Buddhist or Bon religions by which Dzogchen has been transmitted. Recitation of mantra and visualization of deities, oblation, praise and prayer are all remnants of buddhist tantra. Any ritual worship and dogma that are practiced by Dzogchen adepts have an extraneous source. Dzogchen cannot become a subject of comparative religion because it is not a religion any more than digging a garden is a religion, or maintaining a motorbike is a religion. Dzogchen is as natural as the beating of the heart or breathing through the nose. It is like walking down the razor’s edge on a pathless path.

Dzogchen is an existential yoga and it can only be appreciated, criticized, and understood by living it, much as chocolate can only be known by tasting it. To those readers who are already nestled in the Dzogchen reality, Longchenpa’s thirteen cantos may appear like a fishing net cast into an empty boat from the ocean, rather than a net cast into the sea from a boat replete with its catch. The fish are where they should be already—swimming with us in our sea; the boat, the fishermen and the net are redundant. To reiterate the simplistic traditional simile, why search in the jungle for the elephant when the animal is tied up in its stable? To those reading this in expectation of finding an answer to the plight of separation and alienation, to the eternal problem of suffering embodied in samsara, and thus exercising the rational analytic mind to unravel the conundrum of Dzogchen expression, consider the rainbow present in the dissolution of our elemental, corporeal body where resolution is attained. For

those who trawl Longchenpa's cantos for a breath of fresh air, for a straw to hang on to as a life raft, the book should be thrown away, and in simply sitting the Dzogchen contemplation should be allowed to occur. Longchenpa does offer a solution to people strangled by their intellect in an era where society has not a jot of compassion for those of its members who have lost their intuitive sense of the unity of all things. His answer is to be found in the spaciousness of the nature of being that is the underlying, intrinsic, reality of the intellect, rather than in the cooperative meaning of his well-ordered words.

The taste of this existential yoga is expressed in verse, in thirteen cantos. A canto is a song and these thirteen songs are like thirteen planets revolving around a sun of the purest light, while the cantos' stanzas are like facets of each planet. Each of the cantos reflects an aspect of the central reality; the cantos' titles are all synonyms of the reality that is the ineffable sun. Likewise, each of the stanzas of the cantos is like a facet of a jewel, each reflecting the nature of mind, each in a different way. Expectation of a train of stanzas each linked one to the other by a linear thread of causal meaning developing from a hypothesis to a resolution will be disappointed, and construing a serial connection from stanza to stanza will be counterproductive. Each stanza is complete in itself, like each moment of pure presence in the now. While each stanza has a distinct cast providing a slightly different angle on the nature of mind, all the stanzas are the same. They are all the same insofar as what is evoked is always precisely the same thing. Likewise, the words themselves, although indicating superficially discrete meaning and the grammatical structure providing separate ontological status, they are all identical in the nature of mind.

The move away from expectation of graduated goal-oriented development to multi-faceted appreciation of the text parallels decrease of hope and fear of attaining goals in the future and its replacement by the realization of the perfection of the moment in all its multifarious variety.

Thirteen is a perfect number in the numerology of pre-buddhist Tibetan religion. Each of the thirteen cantos of this book presents a metaphysical formula that describes in its entirety a perspective upon reality. When every reference point in any given perspective is existentially deconstructed (pixelated), then differentiated, dualistic and conflicted constructs along with conjunct karmic propensities resolve themselves like horizontal lines of identically-colored squares disappearing in a game of Tetris, or vertical lines of cards of similar suit vanishing in a digital game of patience, and a unitary view results. The thirteen cantos therefore are like magic spells that evoke a single nondual view, the unitary Dzogchen view.

For those who need analytic supports to understand the cantos, if we construe the thirteen chapters according to a conventional structure and try to perceive serial development in the text, and in blocks of similar cantos, we can begin with the analysis of the scholar Nyoshul Lungtok. According to him, the first

nine cantos are exposition of view; the tenth canto is on meditation; the eleventh on conduct; the twelfth on immediate results; and the thirteenth on final results. Evidently, Nyoshul Lungtok was an academic belonging to the gradualist persuasion. Again, if we relate the thirteen cantos to the four samayas and *trekcho* and *togal*, the first five cantos relate to the first two samayas and *trekcho*, while the remaining eight cantos treat the third and fourth samayas and *togal*. Specifically, the canto entitled Spaciousness relates to absence and to openness; the canto entitled Spontaneity relates to the third samaya; and Inclusivity and Nonduality relate to the fourth. Dzogchen sees through concepts; so are these differentiations useful? At least, most gradualists are unanimous in failing to find in *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* evidence that Longchenpa was more indebted to any one of the three series of Dzogchen (mind, matrix and secret precept series) more than any other.

The lengthy commentary, composed, perhaps, by Longchenpa's White Skull Mountain atelier, provides further rational light upon *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu*. It is not, however, the type of commentary that progresses word by word, phrase by phrase, or even stanza by stanza, elaborating the meaning. Rather, it provides a deep elaboration of meaning while utilizing the stanzas as pegs upon which to hang innumerable Dzogchen precepts indicating view and meditation. This information and instruction provide a first line of retreat from the immediate to the progressive perspective. In so doing, it reduces the majesty of Longchenpa's poetry to prosaic rational comment and the ultimacy of his meaning sometimes to avuncular advice, reducing the apex view and meditation of noncausal nonaction to a graduated path upon which simple technical meditations can hie us on our way. But as his compassionate concern allows in the root text, 'Different strokes for different folks'. It would appear that the root text was the original text and that the commentary was the later addition, rather than that the root text was a mnemonic summary of the original longer text, which is sometimes the case. Some of the cantos are short and show a unitary theme throughout; others are much longer and the divisions indicated in the commentary are not immediately evident as changing themes in the original treatise. Indeed the topics treated by the commentary are sometimes difficult to locate in the original as if the commentator were attempting to put a round theme into a square context.

Then to the matter of secrecy: Dzogchen is considered secret in the Nyingma tradition that carries it. It is deemed so in various ways. Firstly, Dzogchen is secret insofar as some minds are incapable of understanding the topic or the vocabulary or grammar in the Tibetan or in any other language. Secondly, it is secret insofar as many people may understand the topic and the syntax but cannot grasp the meaning of Dzogchen, in the same way that many educated people cannot comprehend a textbook of advanced mathematics. Thirdly, it is secret because the meaning may be grasped intellectually but because what is described is beyond that mind to comprehend in terms of its own past or

potential experience, the meaning is not retained, no advantage accrues and the secret remains locked. In these three ways the text is self-secret.

It is also deemed secret in that some lamas conceal the subject matter of Dzogchen texts like *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* from certain groups of people. Lamas of the tradition may wish to keep the most privileged instruction in their own family or monastic lineage for both selfish personal or altruistic religious reasons or for both. Thus certain qualifications are required of recipients before the transmission can be conveyed or the book can be read. The lineage holders thereby maintain control of the literature and practice. Magical incantations, malediction or curses attached to such works drive fear into the hearts of potentially duplicitous readers or practitioners. Notations added to the texts threaten dire consequences if the samayas (commitments) laid upon the initiates are broken.

Within the practice-lineage, one practical reason for keeping the text secret is to prevent general conceptual information about the practices that the text contains prejudicing the yogin's intellect against personalized meditation instruction transmitted at a later, propitious moment. In other words, an empty, nonconceptual mind is preferred in the recipient of Dzogchen meditation instruction. Mere information about the precepts obstructs transmission. Similarly, the texts are kept from some insiders because it is thought that damage could be done either to their minds or to their process in attainment of nirvana. In recent years, these seminal Dzogchen texts were kept from westerners for one or more of these reasons. A lama may have thought, for instance, that Westerners were simply incapable of understanding the texts, a conception based upon the common Chinese cultural prejudice that all Europeans were barbarians or morons or both. Another reservation was provided by the lama's fear that the material would be stolen and published elsewhere for uncontrolled public consumption. Perhaps it was to be misused, where misuse constituted any purpose other than the support of personal, guided meditation in the conventional manner. Unfortunately, this reservation was indeed sometimes proven valid by western researchers who took 'secret' instruction under the pretense of buddhist commitment, but in search of fame and fortune in the western academy published the material without regard for the lamas' sensibility. Likewise, librarians or obsessive collectors of Tibetan texts would extract books from lamas under false pretenses. Some traditionalist lamas object to their sacred texts being taken and processed in secular western media, their holy dharma disrespected thereby, in much the same way that some Muslims believe their sacred Koran should be held only in the hands of believers.

An important historical reason why secrecy was maintained lies in the relationship between the Nyingma and the yellow hat school. While quite distinct from the sudden school of Chinese Chan (or Japanese Zen), Dzogchen was identified with it by the right wing gradualists in the early

debate between scholars of the Indian Madhyamika school and those of the Tibetan, Chinese-influenced Dzogchen. This misconception was sustained by the Kadampa school and later by their Gelukpa successors. This identification of Dzogchen with the apostasy of the 'sudden' school, which began at the Council of Lhasa in the eighth century, condemned the Nyingma school, which carried the Dzogchen teaching, to a peripheral political status. In the eighteenth century, insupportable pressure from the Gelukpas at the height of their political and military power in Lhasa pressured the principal Nyingma lama of the time, the great tertön Gyurme Dorje at Mindroling, the principal seat of the Nyingma in Central Tibet, into an accord with the Gelukpas. Whatever he stated, 'public', announcement of the Fifth Dalai Lama's accord with Gyurme Dorje, the actual effect was to bury radical Dzogchen deeply within a newly asserted Nyingma monastic hegemony. Therein it was available only to the elite tulku and very bright khempas at the end of a long and arduous buddhist cultural education. The ancient tradition of lay lamas living in village gompas or in secular housing with large shrines was attenuated, and along with it the secular ngakpa tradition. In Kham, Eastern Tibet, which thereafter became the mainspring of dharmic activity and has remained so, the great families tended to have a parallel lineage of father-to-son transmission in the great gompas through the convention of tulku succession. The virulent criticism and even persecution that the Nyingma Dzogchen practitioners were subjected to by the Gelukpas, however, was ample reason to keep the teaching secret, in spite of successive Dalai Lamas' covert practice of Dzogchen. The present Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, has attempted to give new status and acceptability to Dzogchen in the face of unprecedented refusal and outright rejection from certain Geluk schools.

Longchen Rabjampa (1308-1364)

Longchenpa was born in the heart of Tibet in the rich and fertile valley of Dra in Yoru, on the southern side of the Tsangpo. Apart from the years of his exile to Bumtang in Bhutan, he was to spend his life in Central Tibet. His father was the village priest of Todrong descended from an eminent line of married Nyingma lamas that traced their ancestry back to the family of Gyelwa Chokyang, one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples. Both his father and grandfather were yogin adepts. A precocious boy, he could read and write by the age of five. His early practice focused on the eight Nyingma buddha-deities but he also studied and memorized vinaya and prajnaparamita texts. At the age of twelve, he was ordained as a novice at Samye and in his adolescence he studied the *Chakrasamvara-tantra* and the six doctrines of Vajravarahi, the Path and Fruit (*lamdre*) system of the Sakyas, and the *Kalachakra*, amongst others.

At the age of nineteen he was admitted to the Kadampa academy-cum-seminary at Sangphu in the Kyichu valley, which was then Sakya dominated and provided

the finest foundation of scholarship in Tibet. The Nyingma tantras and transmissions were his primary concern but also, in particular, he studied the Kahgyu tradition under the Dzogchen master the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, and the Sakya tradition under Lama Dampa Sonam Gyeltsen. He was nonsectarian, investigating all contemporary schools. At the end of his study at Sangphu, he received the title Rabjampa.

He left Sangphu disenchanted by the academic institution with its political infighting and scholarly narrow-mindedness and took to the contemplative life of a homeless yogin that he was to practice for the rest of his life. Early on, during a dark retreat in Gyama, he had a vision of a sixteen-year-old dakini-protectress that heralded a visionary life dominated by the dakinis wherein they guided him, blessed him and taught him.

In 1336, at the age of twenty-eight, he met Rikzin Kumaraja (1266-1343), a knowledge-bearer yogin who travelled around Central Tibet teaching a small coterie of close disciples. Longchenpa followed him for a number of years suffering deep privation, living on herbs, with only a blanket to keep him warm. Kumaraja, a Karma Kahgyu yogin, the disciple of the Dzogchen master Melong Dorje and also an initiate of Bonpo Dzogchen, became Longchenpa's Dzogchen guru and from him received the entire corpus of Dzogchen initiation, transmission and instruction. Kumaraja eventually appointed him his lineal successor.

In his thirty-first year, Longchenpa began to teach the *Dzogchen Nyingtik*, at Nyiphu Shuksep, not far from Sangphu. That same year, Wozer Gocha discovered the Khandro Nyingtik and gave it to Longchenpa to examine. The following year while giving initiation to eight yogins and yoginis at Gangri Tokar, close to Shuksep, the ganachakra feast became an actual wild communion of participants with dakinis and protectors in which the precept 'mind free from meditation is the bliss' became an actual experience. At this ganachakra Longchenpa received final confirmations and injunctions from Vajravarahi herself specifying the Vimala Nyingtik and Khandro Nyingtik as his mode of practice and teaching. Later in the same month, Padmasambhava himself accompanied by his retinue appeared from the Southwest and was seen to vanish into Longchenpa. That night while Longchenpa making the inner offering, Padmasambhava appeared with Vimalamitra on his right and Vajravarahi on his left with dakinis blowing thighbone trumpets in front while behind was a crowd of yogins and dakinis singing and dancing. During both these visionary experiences, the Dakini Vajravarahi clarified his mind and confirmed her constant presence.

Soon after, Longchenpa started writing, and his output was so immense that it beggars belief. Was he the editor of his many disciples' works, works based on his oral teaching? Did later collectors and editors of his work include the tomes of the many great Dzogchen yogins that flourished at that time? He certainly

wrote under different names, so many that a complete inventory has not been made. *The Seven Treasuries* were his greatest works, and *The Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* was the greatest of the seven.

In his forties, he had become an eminent hermit, his principal hermitage Gangri Tokar, where he did most of his writing. But he had interests outside his prose composition, *kavya* poetry and revelations of treasure. In 1349, he restored the ancient Zhai Lhakhang temple and re-erected its inscribed pillars. He rebuilt the stupa of Shantarakshita on Hepori in Lhasa and conserved the abbot's skull. In his latter years, he sired three children by different women, and one of his sons, Chodak Zangpo, wrote a biography of his father. He became a preceptor of the Drigungpas, the old power of Central Tibet, and incurred the wrath of Situ Jangchub Gyeltsen, the chief of the rising Karma Kahgyu power. After miraculously escaping an assassination attempt, in 1354 he exiled himself to Bumtang in Bhutan. He later returned to Central Tibet and was reconciled with Situ, but he died soon after in Chimphu in 1364 at the age of fifty-six.

Political Issues

The English translation of Longchenpa's masterpiece may appear to some as a finished work of composition reflecting the Tibetan original. This is far from the truth. Longchenpa's *Treasury of the Dharmadhatu* is a poetic mystical revelation that requires a mind of similar luminosity to render it into another language. Longchenpa's major works comprise only a fraction of the mystical masterpieces of Tibetan Buddhism that require translation with a pitch of resonance and height of evocation similar to the King James version of the Bible. We need western Longchenpas to rewrite this perennial mystical experience in an authentic language ringing true from the first word to the last. In this translation we have expunged a lot of the tired English argot that was contrived originally to translate the Mahayana sutras and shastras, but we still have a long way to go before Dzogchen texts shine in the great tradition of English poetry, evoking T.S. Eliot or Jack Kerouac—and in Dzogchen it is the poetry that matters as much as, or even more than, the philosophical content. Academics are necessary and useful, but our best hope for Dzogchen texts lies with the yogin-poets, even if that implies expanding the scope of transmission to include a far wider audience.

Does this approach vitiate the lineage in any way? Does it permit unscrupulous charlatan or psychopathic teachers to pre-empt the closed circle of Dzogchen lineage-holders in a susceptible, credulous, new age market? What of the new-age Dzogchen imitators who have obtained their knowledge from books and study? Should they be welcomed as homegrown, self-realized, nondualist Dzogchen adepts? 'Lineage' in Dzogchen is synonymous with 'the ground of being', but is it the *sine qua non* for other nondual teachers? And then the issue of SAMAYA: we must accept that after initiatory experience, until a student has assimilated and familiarized him or herself with the view, secrecy—or at least

discretion—can be extremely valuable as a hedge against energy leakage and conventional, deleterious prioritization. Yet, since the heart-teaching is always self-secret, dissemination of the Dzogchen view and celebration of the great significance of nonmeditation need not be circumscribed by the teacher's personal vow of secrecy. Due to poor presentation and erroneous interpretation some recipients of the view may find their egos inflated by it; but for most recipients the view is ego-destructive and undermines and resolves the manipulative, dualizing intellect.

Mine is another, alternative, translation of the seminal Dzogchen text *Chos dbyings mdzod*, which is the masterpiece of the master Longchenpa. The first publication of this work, in 2001, under the title *The Precious Treasury of Basic Space*, may yet prove to be a turning point in the history of Dzogchen in the West. A group of western Dzogchen practitioners, who had not absorbed Dzogchen in its oriental home, translated and published the supreme classical work of Dzogchen under the auspices of a rikzin-lama and with the assistance of khenpo-scholars, but essentially inspired by their own existential understanding. Dzogchen was thus reclaimed by the people who need it from the caretakers who can no longer use it in the cultural context in which it evolved. We should hope that Dzogchen retains a deep sacred place within Tibetan consciousness, but our principal aspiration is for Dzogchen to take root in the West and heal the deep rifts that judeo-christian dualism has wrought in the meta-structural consciousness of Europeans people. In order for this to occur, the supra-cultural meaning of Dzogchen must be lifted by its existential bootstraps out of monastic isolation and primping cults into the clear light of day, where it can be embraced by the existential and literary mainstream that is open to a nondual view. This translation attempts to move literary Dzogchen exposition in that direction.

Dzogchen must leap out of the academies into the lives of the people on the ground who aspire to live it, or, rather, who are struggling to live it as through a glass darkly without the benefit of the heart-teaching. Governed now by an elitist group of linguists and sectarian, commercial publishers on one side and covens of secretive esoteric practitioners on the other, Dzogchen risks becoming lost in an impenetrable sectarian labyrinth. The religious history of Tibet had its own necessary religio-political logic that banished Dzogchen to a secret, underground status; the needs of the West surely require quite a different upshot.

Longchenpa's work, like *Spaciousness*, allows the possibility that scientists, the high priests of post-christian society, particularly the physicists, can recognize the apex of buddhist thinking as a corollary of their own. Dzogchen texts and western commentaries should be accessible to psychologists—particularly Cognitive psychiatrists and Gestalt psychologists, to physicists, particularly particle and quantum physicists, and philosophers. From East Asia, Zen, Chan and Taoism have created a profound wave of spacious, inseminating attitudes

and vibration flooding through the thinking of many western disciplines—Dzogchen is set to crown that tendency. A similar statement could be made about the influence of Advaita Vedanta and Kashmiri Shaivism upon the West; but Dzogchen will eclipse their influence because of the breadth of its view, the rationality and scope of its mysticism, the lucidity and clarity of its texts and the deep roots and vitality of its tradition.

Not only should scholars be released and absolved from their stranglehold on Dzogchen exposition, but the conservatism of Tibetan holders of the tradition should also be given a rest. As conservators of the Vajrayana tradition in general, and Dzogchen in particular, the Tibetan rikzins and tulkus could not be surpassed. Even the holocaust of the Chinese Cultural Revolution could not destroy what they had preserved in scripture and in oral transmission for as much as twelve hundred years. Now, in the exile environment, limited nationalistic thinking may defeat the purpose of their dharma when non-Tibetan people hungry for the vital meaning of nondualism need the transmission so urgently. This assumes that the Dzogchen mindset goes a long way to resolve the world's ecological, political and economic problems. It would be tragic indeed if Dzogchen were to remain the exclusive prerogative of those with birthright and thereby allow it to perish within the inevitable death throes of autochthonous Tibetan religious culture. What western consumers of Dzogchen require from the Tibetan lamas are the qualities that Dzogchen espouses—detachment, openness, spontaneity, kindness and an inclusive supportive fellowship. With condescension, self-serving or tightfisted protectiveness, or an acquisitive business attitude, the bud on the bough is likely to wither before the spring is out. Like economic protectionism, spiritual isolationism is counter-productive—like shooting oneself in the foot.

As a codicil to that, I reflect that my own root gurus, although sustaining a genuine front of traditionalism, in my perception were infinitely flexible, bountifully generous and graciously supportive—but that was at an earlier, more humbling, more auspicious time. In conclusion, we congratulate Richard Barron for his ground breaking translations of Longchenpa's *Seven Treasuries* and honor Chagdud Tulku among Tibetans for his rare faith in his western disciples' understanding and realization. Just as a crystal once grown in an experimental laboratory can thereafter more easily be grown in another far distant laboratory, so once a text has been opened by one translator it is made vastly more accessible to other translators. If Dzogchen is Tibet's greatest gift to humanity, those who can work together should work together to share it without stint.

Everything Is Light: The Circle of Total Illumination

This tantra, *The Circle of Total Illumination*, the *Tiklay Kunsel*, is a definitive expression of Dzogchen. It provides the apex view of Dzogchen praxis. It is one of the highest of the atiyoga tantras. It presents a view that translates existentially into 'the great perfection'. It is a root tantra, from which later instruction, explanation and practices developed. It is an explanatory tantra, a text that is the key to all other atiyoga tantras and therefore to the entire Nyingma atiyoga tradition. It is definitive also in that it presents the nondual nature of mind just as it is, in our hearts, without any prevarication, without exposition of preliminary practices or provisional precepts and without the need of foundational instruction or methods of attaining stages along a path.

The meaning of this book's title implies that everything we know directly is awareness in the now and, in that sense, awareness is 'light'—the very cognizant light that is conscious experience, and constitutes inseparable knowing and the knowable. All phenomena in sensory perception are 'light'. The entire pantheon of buddha-being is composed of light. Dzogchen is the vehicle of light—light is both the source and the manifestation. Such is the Dzogchen view, which provides recognition of present awareness in the now and recognition of nondual initiatory experience at the beginning, and constitutes the final achievement of the rainbow body at the end. The existential realization of this truth is not immediately accessible in the first and second turnings of the wheel of the buddha-dharma; it is only in the final turning, and particularly in the Nyingma tantras, that it is overtly expressed.

With that understanding, the rudimentary spiritual practice of buddhist cultural training consisting of provisional views and practices that mimic human growth from infant to adult may be severed from the radically different full-bodied mystical insight of Dzogchen. With such insight, the definitive revelation of Dzogchen, a final holistic vision, becomes identical to the universal human experience of nonduality. Since all our experience is comprehended as light, light is the only reality and 'Everything Is Light' is, therefore, the seminal message.

This entire tantra can be effectively described as a series of visions, and visionary experience can only be composed of light. We understand, here, first and foremost, that 'light' is the light of awareness of both source and manifestation nondual—regardless of whether what is manifested is mundane or sublime, regardless of whether it appears 'inside' or 'outside', regardless of

whether the experience is of this bardo of life or any other bardo. As such, all experience in the immediate now is and can only be an expression of this light of awareness. In that nondual sense is everything light. Consequently, all experience is 'nondual' insofar as the light of awareness has rendered experience conscious and knowledge knowable. It has always been nondual and cannot be anything else. No union of separate 'light of awareness' on the one hand and 'experience' on the other can occur.

Everything is light and everything is a sublime vision of Vairochana's buddha-mandala. Yet distinct samadhis, described in the hidden sectioning of the tantra, are distinguished as separate visions of light. The Vairochana buddha-mandala, described herein, is a vision of light; the buddha-deities—whether conceived in their psychological actuality or in their symbolic anthropomorphic form—are lightforms. Consider the vocabulary employed in Tibetan to describe nondual reality, so difficult to reproduce in English: it consists essentially of innumerable synonyms of light. Finally, the most effective way to introduce Dzogchen itself, to point at the nondual experience of the nature of reality, is to evoke the light of the mind.

Everything is light is the overarching message of this tantra. Its implications are decisive in radical Dzogchen—Dzogchen stripped down to its seminal bones—and its ramifications are of crucial import in our everyday lives. One primary implication of the initiatory vision of everything as light—Vajradhara's nondual view—is that burgeoning therapeutic cults and the vestiges of redundant religion are at best mild antidotes to the inadequacies of the human condition and that new age 'spiritual practice' is redundant. What we have in the here and now is reality itself, and nothing else has real value or meaning. Look into this very moment and it opens up into a utopia that displays all experience as perfect just as it, so that nothing exists to correct or change. Any movement in the direction of 'improvement' is counterproductive and undermines natural perfection. Any goal other than recognition of present sensory lightform, internal or external, is an aberration. Any effort applied to attain something that does not already exist or to facilitate what is naturally arising in the now creates obscuration. Since this tantra demonstrates the principle of nonaction and authentic compassion, presenting Dzogchen atiyoga in a nascent form, it provides recognition of the ineffable parts of an ever-changing unitary experience that is evanescent and empowering.

The ninety-seven chapters of this tantra comprehensively cover the many aspects of Dzogchen and this introductory space is insufficient for a detailed explanatory commentary. Rather, this introduction is used to address contemporary issues that can obscure full and immediate awareness of existential Dzogchen.

Simultaneous with recognition of the nature of mind in radical Dzogchen is the understanding that elaborate meditation—and along with it all 'spiritual

practice’—is superfluous. If the square peg of spiritual practice is forced into the round hole of karmic inevitability is useless, so also is dogma and cant, whether it be rational and humanistic or religious and apocalyptic. Buddhist belief systems that define a specific starting point, an elaborate path and a goal, for instance, provide dogma tailored to the requirements of adherents of religious institutions structured by authoritarian hierarchies that spoon-feed their adherents on a graduated path. Thereby, by default, spiritual materialism infects the minds of well-intentioned people susceptible to attachment to the intent of coherent oral or written soteriological teaching. Radical Dzogchen, free of belief, cannot be dogmatic; indeed it is entirely pragmatic in that the view arises spontaneously in response to the requirements of every unique moment. For that reason no lineage, no lama, no human teacher, has any exclusive rights over expression of the nature of mind, nor possesses any special handle on any form of skillful means. Nor has any individual in the past, present or future, any final or monopolistic expression of the view—which is, in truth, no-view.

Predicated upon the defining experience of recognition of the nature of mind, it becomes incontrovertible that no authority—individual or institutional—has the right nor the capacity to dictate the form of the teaching or the rules of conduct for any other being. It is self-evident that no individual has more or less proximity to Dzogchen than any other; absolute existential equality reigns. By the same token, Dzogchen cannot be caught in a restrictive institution, because the real Dzogchen community, its authentic sangha, has no bounds, and since no overt signs or material achievement manifest, no hierarchy of accomplishment can be certified. Dzogchen reality is ineffable and inexpressible, unreified and indeterminate. It manifests in uncountable ways across an infinite spectrum of possibility in response to ever-unique situations.

The clarification of the nonduality of Dzogchen is a principal thread in this *Tiklay Kunsel* tantra. But although we may look for an uncompromising rigorous discursive expression of a nondual vision or view in these atiyoga tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, of course it cannot be found. Nonduality cannot be expressed or described; it can only be implied and inferred as in the early chapters of this tantra. Each reader down the centuries, and even in different cultures, finds his own elixir in a sea of poison; reading through the text of this tantra lines and verses (*slokas*) that point at that all-inclusive reality jump readily into mind.

In this existential drama of Dzogchen, the securities of religion as an attraction and an attachment provide an enticement to take refuge in fixed dogma and practice. Such temptation is overcome by treating the ritual, offerings, worship, liturgies, dogma and belief systems of religion as the phenomenology of primal awareness, which, of course, includes equally all human experience, profane as well as sacred. What is excluded by present awareness is attachment to—and exclusive belief in—any specific phenomenon or appearance. The habit of

church-going, for example, entailing prayer (The Lord's Prayer), offering (the monetary collection), worship (ritualized humility), liturgy (the Creed), the sacrament (Eucharist, baptism, marriage), and so on, all recognized in the all-inclusive light of the mind, is nonmeditation. Further, although we may mouth the words that pronounce Jesus Christ the only light, truth and way, or articulate refuge in the Triple Gem, or assert that Allah is Great, our recognition of mind's nature in those words dissolves the specific particles of vocal energy in the timeless moment of their arising and dissolve their particularity and partiality—together with any fixation upon them—into a unitary field of cognition. Thus relative and absolute are a unity in the ultimate ineffable dharmakaya of the here and now.

If religion is abhorred by Dzogchen, philosophy—considered as an academic discipline rather than an existential praxis—is of greater anathema. What can be more detrimental to unitary awareness than a discipline engaged in asserting the validity of mental constructs, which by nature are dualistic, imposing conceptual super-impositions upon the ineffable here and now, and insisting upon the opacity of the emperor's new clothes. If Dzogchen has a moment that involves the intellect, then it is in a provisional capacity, soon to be relinquished, not with shame or sorrow but with abandonment and glee. If the *Tiklay Kunsel* appears to have a philosophical rather than an existential purpose, then Chapter 86 on the fourfold pointing out has not been experientially absorbed. It is imperative, of course, that we comprehend the secret precepts so that we can bathe in the supra-rational, intellect-transcending, present awareness that is at the heart of Dzogchen; for that reason the definitions and explanations of the language of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, its metaphors and similes, are of crucial significance. But if the precepts themselves—and the *Tiklay Kunsel* is composed of them—are taken to have any value over and above the momentary illumination provided by their cognition, then their very point has been lost. The leap into the nondual experience of the light of awareness has been precluded by the confining concepts of an intellectual cage.

The practical Dzogchen issue, here, is the infectious vanity attendant upon academic study that is created by the delusory, supposedly incontrovertible, conclusions deduced from refined logical analysis. The intellect, engorged by its own lucidity and cogency, forgets or ignores the precept that logic and rational reasoning have no authority in Dzogchen, where the intuitive experiential light of the heart rules. Reason leads us astray when its intrinsic radiance and its emptiness are veiled; readers whose recognition of the nature of mind is yet weak and immature are in danger of being swept away into arrant materialism. When the light of present awareness shines strongly, rational and logical thought is humbled, demoted or disappears entirely.

Dzogchen is validated by existential and mystical experience. When it is treated as an academic discipline, when a teacher relies upon reason to convince his students of the nature of mind, it becomes a travesty. Insofar as the

contemporary western academic milieu entails goal orientation and fulfillment in a contentious profession, it militates against Dzogchen realization and to the extent that academic publishers are restricted by commercial and sectarian concerns, the truth of nondual experience is lost in volumes of empty verbiage. In the current atmosphere of fashionable and commercial western Buddhism, both authors and publishers, like Mara's daughters, reach out to tempt the intellect, filling libraries and the internet with their exuberant hubris and emollient prose, occluding the nature of mind, veiling mystical experience. It is as if precepts that can open up into existential understanding were presented rather for the sake of their own aesthetic form, mimicking 'art for art's sake'.

The Quantum Leap

'Quantum mysticism' has provided useful metaphors that move the rational mind towards acceptance of the anomalous phenomenology of nonduality. That the arch-priests of scientific materialism are arrant dualists with a methodology steeped in the principles of subject-object dualism and that these metaphors have no relevance to quantum mechanics field theory is immaterial; we baby-boomers of the 20th century have been conditioned to accept the physicists' pontification and prognostication over those of priests and philosophers, and thus the metaphors derived from quantum physics gain currency, validity and efficacy. When we are told, for example, that the electron, which revolves around the nucleus of the atom, moves in and out of different orbits without apparent cause or condition, leaving no trace of its previous revolution, our rational intellects may space out and a moment may arise adventitiously when the nature of mind can shine through and an existential understanding of 'nonabiding' may arise.

Moreover, we are told, when the observer/experimenter turns his concentrated attention to that particle, attempting to pin it down, it appears to vanish, as if acute dualization of subjective and objective aspects of the perceptual process dissolve the field of consciousness, and as if only with a soft focus in which the entire field is included does it again become visible. Further, when it has apparently disappeared, the electron no longer has the characteristics of a particle, but seems to assume the attributes of a wave. Look for the wave and find a particle; look for a particle and find a wave. Our senses are not to be trusted; the multi-dimensional web of illusion is beyond the intellect to comprehend! Then, when an electron is halved and the halves separated, by as much as thousands of miles, they still react as a unitary pair, as if the space they inhabited was not the four dimensional space-time of our ordinary delusory experience, but an enigmatic matrix in which our common sense assumptions about reality are mistaken.

Perhaps an even more poignant ramification of the quantum myth is the desubstantiation of our ordinary environment and the life within it. If the atoms which constitute all things whatsoever are in fact lacking any nucleus and

consist of elements that at best come in and out of apparent existence and even when in existence have no location or constancy, how can the forms which they compose be any more substantial? Here, consistency of logical thought leads us to a description of *maya*, the phenomenal appearances that arise in the mind through the medium of the senses. The 1st century A.D. Indian metaphysician Nagarjuna promoted eight metaphors to illustrate *maya*: the wonderment of magical illusion, the reflection of the moon in water, optical illusion, mirage, dream, echo, cloud cuckoo land, and apparition.

Technically speaking 'the quantum leap' refers to the change of an electron's orbital revolution around its nucleus. The same particle is revolving around the same nucleus in the same way, but the orbit has shifted. No explanation for the change has been devised. No one saw it happen. No one pulled any strings to make the change. There is no apparent cause. It was not a karmic, causal, event. No defining conditions through which the event can be replicated are evident. It is what can be called a 'synchronic event' in that it is without apparent cause or condition. For us 'the quantum leap' has the connotation of synchronicity; but also in the wake of a noncausal, or 'spontaneous' event, wherein the intellect has let go momentarily, an intimation of the nature of mind arises, a moment of initiatory experience in which present awareness has regained its primacy. In this way the quantum leap provides us with an analogy for the move from the narrow linear view of rational thinking to the all-inclusive nondual view of Dzogchen, which is elucidated here in this circle of total illumination, in all-illuminating holistic essence.

The Pointing Out

Dzogchen, or more particularly, the realization of the nature of mind, may not be transmitted from one mind to another, but it can be pointed at, like a finger pointing at the moon. Simple pointing out is enough because what is to be pointed at has always been there and always will be there and nothing can be done to remove it, to subtract from it or to add to it, or change it in any way. To realize the nature of mind, nothing need be created or contrived, for that would mean new material, new product, and much effort, like building a house. The nature of mind or the primal ground has always been present and we have always been subliminally aware of it, but in the end we have been distracted by the ramifications of embodiment and an inferred need to survive, to strive and thrive for survival, and surviving to reproduce the species. In general, however, the fear of failure and particularly fear of death, the attraction of the little sensual pleasure we can eke out of our lives, or the boredom and enervation with which life enshrouds us, veils what is beyond language to express and what is hidden beneath the limen of ordinary consciousness.

The *Tiklay Kunsel* shows us several ways in which the pointing out is to be done. First, through articulation of the Dzogchen view a direct introduction to the primal ground of being may be induced in which all-inclusive, holistic,

envisionment—the trikaya itself—is signified. Again, through clever juxtaposition of words, through poetry and prose, the nature of mind can be suggested. Merely by naming a part of the sublime vision of Dzogchen, the vision may be conjured like a jewel envisioned by knowledge of just one of its facets, or like knowledge of a whole through a holographic particle. Further, comprehending the relationship of parts may affect the same result. Powerful poetic tools that can be utilized to optimize that intimation are simile and metaphor, or analogy, like ‘the reflection of the moon in water’, as discussed below. Thus, pointing out the view through evocative oral verbalization may induce the meditation, or rather, the nonmeditation.

This pointing out of present awareness, or introduction to the nature of mind, is a mouth to ear conveyance of verbal information. It may appear to constitute a condition, a method by which a neophyte can be initiated into the Dzogchen mandala. Surely, the verbal elucidation of Dzogchen is a discursive mantra that magically conditions the uninitiated in a way that provides initiatory experience. Such an exposition, surely, is a wide doorway into the primal ground of being, and every utterance of one of the sacred words that define an aspect of the ineffable, surely, is a window upon the nature of mind. Surely, Dzogchen is accessible through the scriptures, through tantras, agamas and upadeshas. Such assertions, however, cannot be accepted in radical Dzogchen because the horse may be led to water but it cannot be made to drink. Only if the horse is thirsty will it drink; only by virtue of an auspicious synchronistic moment free of motivation and intentionality can intimation of the nature of mind arise, and arise by itself, spontaneously, as initiatory experience. Thus, the pointing out is not a cause or a primary condition for recognition of the nature of mind; rather, it may better be conceived as an amplification of a pre-existent situation that may awaken the listener to the possibility of recognition. The moment will not be grasped existentially, however, unless there is an absence of aspiration, a moment of nonaction, in the putative initiate’s mind. If any trace of hope or fear lingers, the best that can be achieved is a rational understanding or an intellectual appreciation.

This same principle is valid in regard to the fourfold symbolic pointing out described in Chapter 86 and also to the ritual empowerments in Chapters 62 and 63.

Secondly, regarding this fourfold symbolic pointing out, the *Tiklay Kunsel* describes a direct pointing out of the nature of mind through symbols. This pointing out by an exhibition of symbols is accompanied by a discursive statement of the view by the teacher, as described above. The pertinent phrase here is ‘exhibition of symbols’ —the pointing out is done through symbols.

What is described in Chapter 86 provides the bones of a ritual that later becomes the Empowerment of Creative Presence (*riempi tsewang*). But the initiatory agent in this ritual may gather initiates into the sanctum sanctorum

and place a symbol of reality carefully before their eyes while reciting the sacred formula, but it is a synchronic moment that cannot in anyway be contrived in which the nature of mind is recognized. The rider may bring his horse to water but he cannot make it drink, and when the horse does indeed drink, if the rider takes the credit he is preposterously inappropriate. To invoke the magical power of the ritual or the magician as the crucial factor when initiates do indeed recognize the nature of mind in a formal situation is likewise absurd. If it is objected that sometimes attendees at public initiations frequently appear to experience unusual or transcendent states, it is useful to recall that such states are commonly experienced at pop concerts and football matches. The nature of mind is not something that can be objectified or described heuristically.

To restate this issue, the discursive pointing out of the nature of mind is a ritual performance similar to the ritual of empowerment and initiation. It may 'set us up' for the real event that occurs at a synchronic moment, but as a series of physical and verbal karmas in a space-time continuum it cannot by itself induce a realization of the nature of mind. No matter how efficacious the ritual, it is a pattern of relativity that cannot induce the ultimate acausal reality. The relative and the absolute are a unity in the here and now and that ultimacy cannot be induced. Any attempt at inducement will end in failure. The most that can be achieved is a lowering of the threshold at which a synchronic moment can be recognized, or a dissolution of obstacles that inhibit recognition of what is already there. Any movement at all, any stirring away from or towards whatever is already present, merely accentuates the duality that we seek to resolve.

In a historical perspective, it appears that in Tibet, by the 18th century, the simple pointing out as formulated in this tantra had become an elaborate ceremonial as described in Jigme Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingtik*, which is the principal cycle of Dzogchen liturgical and explanatory texts emanating from that period. Perhaps this development reveals a degradation of time from dharmayuga to kaliyuga, when the human mind can no longer apprehend meaning experientially and merely stores preceptual implications as discursive information, data to be used when self-interest determines that benefit may accrue. Perhaps this evolution from simple to elaborate ritual indicates a failure of instantaneous recognition and a move towards faith in a graduated path. Perhaps it is evidence that for us in this kaliyuga, the fag-end of time, the ritual method is at best the placement of a mental escape hatch, a mind frame in which meaning can be directly assimilated at a later date, a set up for use down the path, or like ritual empowerment merely a ploughing and drilling and setting of seeds in the rational mind for a later maturation by acausal means, at a synchronic moment, for a life-changing insight. Perhaps we should accept this tantra's implicit precept that even the slightest movement towards Dzogchen as a goal is the sour grapes of those who cannot let go.

The empowerments described in Chapter 62 are special methods of pointing out. The symbolic introductions of Chapter 86 are a simple pointing out, whereas the vase empowerment and so on are highly ritualistic, so complex indeed that the point can be easily missed. The point is that we are already empowered, but we can recognize that fact only when we are told authoritatively and in a way that bypasses the critical and dictatorial dualistic intellect. It is as if in a social gathering we cannot communicate with other guests until we have been formally introduced. Some minds need authorization in order to feel empowered. Chapter 62 iterates, 'Unsought, unconferrd, empowerment is replete in the primal ground.' The ritual empowerments utilize most of the principal symbols in the higher tantra arsenal pointing out their actual meaning, unpacking them and asserting a nondual relationship with them, 'neither in union nor separation'. If the ambience of a public Tibetan ritual empowerment, its sensory input, its mixed psychic nuances, its evident cultural specifics are over-whelming, the pages of the *Tiklay Kunsel* are not. It is remarkable that the tantra does not use the word 'guru' or 'lama' at all; the secret precepts are the message and the teacher is Vajradhara, the nature of mind.

Gradual and Instantaneous Realization

This discussion of transmission and ritual bears upon the contemporary issue of instantaneous recognition versus the developing present awareness of the graduated path. This issue is not addressed explicitly in the *Tiklay Kunsel*, but wherever 'nonaction', 'nonmeditation', 'nonpractice' 'non-goal-orientation' or 'sublime vision' is mentioned, instantaneous realization is implied. Garab Dorje may have ignored the issue because it is an academic consideration pursued by analysts observing Dzogchen from the outside. For the adept whose initiatory experience has provided recognition of the nature of mind, experience of reality is described in the early chapters of the tantra and the issue is an irrelevancy, a scholastic aberration. For those who have yet to identify the nature of mind, the issue consists of a horde of concepts to kick about on an academic playing field, or to address in formal debate in the classroom. It may appear to be resolved academically by a belief in the inseparability of the gradual and instantaneous, but until confidence in experience replaces attachment to mental constructs, such a belief is a burden that forces the scholar to his knees, an impervious, insuperable, obstacle.

The unity of gradual and instantaneous, however, may be given as a precept in the Dzogchen view, where the gradual path is understood as a succession of karmically determined moments and the instantaneous pathless path as the recognition of the nature of mind in whatever karmically determined moment occurs simultaneous with its arising. In this way, even those who deny their recognition of the nature of mind and strive on a laddered path towards an undiscovered goal have a view that supports an experiential intimation of it. Without this precept, adherents of the graduated path become increasingly

bemired in a temporal sadhana wherein the goal is reified and the path exclusive. Certainly all beings under the sun are candidates for a synchronic moment of initiatory experience independent of cause and condition, but a supramundane lifestyle of ritual devotion and spiritual praxis does not take anyone a whit closer to that acausal apotheosis.

Again, in this perspective the view is not to be taken as a cause. The view, which is no-view, *is* the meditation; where the cause is not separate from the effect, the effect may just as well be considered the cause. But the view cannot be learned; no amount of striving on a graduated path can induce it; it can only be existentially-experientially realized. Elements of the view may be pointed out, but again the introduction to the nature of mind cannot be considered a cause or a condition. The pointing out itself is the meditation. Cause and effect are indistinguishable; the starting point and the goal are one; no path or technique links samsara to nirvana. Reality arises by itself out of itself, spontaneously, and nothing can be done to induce spontaneity except to 'hurry up and wait'. The precepts of the view in themselves are the nature of mind; there is nothing to do and nowhere to go.

Sublime Vision

The sublime vision of Dzogchen is without partiality or bias. It has a total absence of preference, which includes an absence of preference for any space or any time; the vision can therefore be called nonspatial and nontemporal. Such a vision has neither attributes nor any particular character. It has no tendency towards any change, towards any improvement or ideal. It is complete and perfect in itself. It is this vision that is enjoyed by the Dzogchen vidyadharas, the knowledge-holders or bearers of pure presence. From their perspective, no temporal progression is possible because past, present and future have been integrated into Great Time, where lineal time consists of a series of timeless moments that effectively negate any sense of temporal development. Living in the first of the three kalpas that denote degrees of progressive degradation of mind from nondual unity to dualistic alienation, the vidyadhara sees no distinction between buddha, bodhisattva and human being. Here, it is not simple longevity that has been attained but immortality itself where neither birth nor death is suffered.

From the perspective of ordinary sentient beings, from a seemingly external point of view that feels temporal progression and perceives it objectively, such vidyadharas are part of a succession of individuals who have realized the nature of mind and have fully assimilated it, adepts for whom sublime vision is the ordinary way of seeing. But since sublime vision has no attribute, it cannot be recognized as such and cannot be identified. Since it is indeterminate in nature, it cannot be expressed; no stance of mind (*mudra*), no symbolic word or act, and no oral teaching can convey that vision.

In regard to the vital issue of lineage, then, to the vidyadhara it is an immediate connection to the essence, the essence that is no different from the appearance. Only the unitary nondual experience of reality exists, where that unity is comprised of the three dimensions, the three kayas—dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya—iconographically depicted as Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva and the ‘Guru’ personified as Garab Dorje. That is the ‘short lineage’. From the outside, conceived in time, the lineage is called the ‘long lineage’. It begins with Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva and Garab Dorje and the early non-Tibetan teachers, Manjushrimitra and Shri Singha and then continues with Bairotsana (Vairochana) and the adepts of the Tibetan empire period and an unbroken succession of tulkus down the centuries to this day and to our masters, Dudjom Rinpoche and Kanjur Rinpoche. And, yet, since their sublime vision is ineffable, beyond expression, the lineage transmits nothing; it is this absence that is called ‘nondual compassion’. That the Tibetan ecclesiastical establishment recognizes a distinction between an institutional lineage, which is a formal, hierarchical lineage, and a ‘practice lineage’ of committed yogin-adepts, is nugatory.

The lineages in the higher, Dzogchen, tantras are basically counted as threefold: the lineages of sublime vision (mind), symbolic demonstration (body) and oral transmission (speech). It is clear that the lineage of sublime vision, described above, does not entail any transmission or teaching. Indeed, in another nondual tradition, as Tilopa said to Naropa to preface his instruction, ‘Mahamudra cannot be taught.’ We may deduce, therefore, that ‘sublime vision’, the ‘nature of mind’, the ‘primal ground’ or ‘nonduality’ cannot be transmitted, that it cannot be conveyed or demonstrated positively in space-time. Neither nondual mind nor initiatory experience can be conveyed in or across space-time in either symbols or words. It can, however, be pointed at; its existence can be mooted; its name can be spoken. Thereby, what is always present, what can never be alienated or lost, what is immutable and changeless, what is neither united nor separated, is allowed recognition. That recognition fulfills Garab Dorje’s first incisive precept.

To express it in different terms, the direct introduction by symbolic or oral pointing out occurs in the nirmanakaya dimension, where minds wandering in samsaric confusion have the good fortune to experience magical *nirmanakaya* emanation. Such emanation provides symbolic or oral indications appropriate to the moment, so that at a juncture of synchronicity the *nature* of mind is perceived as sensory appearance in which any distinction between the subjective knower and the objective known is collapsed within the act of knowing.

To conclude Tilopa’s initial instruction to Naropa, ‘Mahamudra cannot be taught, but most devoted Naropa, here is your instruction.’ The pointing out is done by exposition of the view as revealed in Chapter 40 of this text herein and may be construed as demonstration of oral transmission. Chapter 71 lists the

five defining principles of effective exposition of the view (*agama* teaching, *lung*): purity of tradition, unconditional teaching, credible transmission, uncorrupted transcription, and harmony with other aspects of the tradition. The pointing out is also effected by the ritual of symbolic transmission as described in Chapter 31, and by visual sharing of symbols, symbolic gestures, or involuntary body language, all of which may be construed as demonstration of symbolic transmission.

One of the subsidiary lineages of oral transmission—as an extension of ‘uncorrupted transcription’ in the list of five defining principles—is the lineage of ‘the precious library’. Insofar as concepts by their shape and color, in their juxtaposition can induce mental states—intellectual, emotional or sentimental—books may substitute for a human teacher (*khenpo*). With equal certainty, we may assert that some crucial value is infused into an oral communication by a voice that is existentially cognizant of what is articulated. It is as if the vibration of authentic speech affects the energetic quality of being in ways that mental constructs divorced from experience of mind’s nature cannot.

A greater intensity and resilience of understanding are provided by authenticity. Further, to the extent that the precious texts of the library are less bemired by the emotional resonance of attachment and subjective cultural baggage, the words standing out on the page much as colors arise out of the primal ground, they may provide a better conduit of transmission than a faulty, inauthentic, oral source. From the inclusion of the word ‘transcription’ within the principles of oral transmission, it may be inferred that a transcribed talk from a teacher with whose voice one is familiar has an added value.

Dzogchen and Entheogens

Consideration of the validity of experience, and the relative authenticity of states of mind can be broadened to include evaluation of chemically induced entheogenic⁷ experience. If durability of epiphany is the criterion used to evaluate our best psychedelic experience, entheogens must be demoted to the level of ritual initiation, which provide an variable reflection dependent upon external conditions, showing us what is possible, like the *petit mort* of orgasm. Authentic experience of the nature of mind produces an ineradicable potency. Further, like ritual, entheogens provide circumstances that do not automatically induce knowledge of the nature of mind, but, rather, provide an opportunity for synchronic moments of full recognition. Besides that wholly positive insight, lesser benefits accruing from psychedelic experience may include significant boosts to confidence on a graduated path. If, firstly, returning from a spacious experience of light we can admit degrees or levels of freedom from dualistic, materialist, confinement, we can be happy with who we are, allowing the principle of nonaction to intervene. A taste of an ultimate state, though ephemeral, still unfamiliar and quickly forgotten, turns the mind away from

cloying samsaric attachment. States of mind that have been ignored as mental aberrations or as virtually psychotic or antisocial, many now be assimilated to consciousness as positive and transcendent. If such benefits are admitted as conditional, entheogens may be accepted as useful tools on a graduated path to elevated consciousness that may or may not contain supersensory powers (*raddhi*), and that acceptance can be done without placing them on a pre-eminent pedestal enthroned as a cause or condition of buddha.

Entheogens may also be capable of repatterning genetic karma, undermining mental habits of a lifetime or loosening the binds of more recent social conditioning. If so, even to a limited degree, the inference must be that entheogens can be useful in diminishing, removing or simply recognizing the transparency of obstacles to awareness of the synchronicitous moment.

As a postscript to these remarks about entheogenic experience, it should be stressed that use of mind-altering substances to induce psychedelic experience with the aim of entering into the nature of mind, or maintaining recognition of the nature of mind, is fundamentally contrary to the Dzogchen view. Effective use of chemical substances implies dependence upon chemical reaction, and such dependence implies motivated activity, which flies in the face of nonaction and that is the one single overarching Dzogchen precept. As a skillful means to attain susceptibility to synchronicity, such activity is as valid as any meditation practice with a goal in mind. But, thereby, the karma of goal-orientation is reinforced, and although a positive karma replaces a negative karma, because the 'rainbow body' is a function of no-karma, the all-inclusive envisionment of the primal ground will still be as far away as the earth is from the sky.

It must also be unequivocally emphasized that the substances referred to in the empowerments mentioned in *Tiklay Kunsel* are symbolic substances. No shred of evidence exists that organic entheogens have ever been employed ritually in the buddhist tantra. This might not be so in the tantric Hindu frame that preceded the advent of buddhist tantra and has run parallel to it until the present day. As in the principle of trituration in homeopathy, which asserts that the more refined and subtle the substance the more powerful the medicinal effect, if the body-mind is sensitized and purified, symbolic substances—or even notional substances—may be more effective than the wholly gross material product. Again, however, the gross substance may be more appropriate, more effective, in cases of damaged or diseased body-mind.

Buddha-Symbology and Trikaya

The issues that this Dzogchen tantra resolves are numerous. In particular, within the frame of trikaya, deity-symbology is introduced and justified. The mahayoga practice of visualization of archetypal anthropomorphic symbols and recitation of buddha-mantras is not prescribed here; rather, the buddha-symbology of the mandala is a description of the psycho-physical elements of every experience couched in the symbolic language of sublime buddha form.

The mandala is the creative expression—the creativity—of the ineffable pure presence of the timeless moment. It is the potency of that creative expression, however, that assimilates every possible element of the wheel of life, every experience of which sentient beings are capable—to present awareness in the now.

Stupas and ritual vajras, for example, are complex plastic symbols of mind; the vajra-chain is a multiple graphic symbol of mind; a *niklé* is a graphic mandalic symbol of mind; the five colors of light are chromatic symbols of mind; metaphors are verbal symbols of mind; and buddha visualizations and images are anthropomorphic symbols of mind; in Dzogchen all symbols—indeed all sensory objects whatsoever—are symbols of the nature of mind, but it is the buddha form that is of primary concern here.

Only one reality (*chos nyid*) can be known, and that is the zero dimension known technically as ‘dharmakaya’, which is nondual and therefore ineffable. What metaphor evokes direct perception of the zero dimension? Emptiness? Immediately reality is conceptualized, however, in the first moment of apperception, a primary duality is conceived. In Dzogchen this is defined as awareness of the now at one pole and spaciousness at the other, where spaciousness is the ground of all form. These polar principles are represented by the anthropomorphic buddha symbols Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri in indissoluble union. In a similar moment of apperception the original ineffable singularity is conceived as a trinity, trikaya, three existential dimensions or three sublime forms (*kayas*). These three are dharmakaya, the nondual, formless, holistic seed of light, and sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya which are form dimensions, the inner form dimension manifesting spontaneously as an inner vision of the five primary colors and the external form dimension manifesting in a vision of the various realms of existence in a sensorially cognized environment. These three dimensions are said to be ‘neither united nor separated’, which implies a nondual absolute

The three dimensions of trikaya may also be conceived as three levels of a smoothly evolving display, from the zero dimension through a subtle internal dimension to the level of unitary outside and inside appearances. These levels and all intervening levels are, therefore, congruous, all containing the product of what has gone before and the potential of what comes after. For this reason a symbol representing the outer dimension may enlighten the inner dimension and all stages of manifestation in between. Likewise, since the outer also contains the secret zero-dimension and, of course, the secret the outer dimensions, every symbol contains the totality. Such an understanding is predicated upon an existential understanding of the truth of nonduality as the one and only natural condition of being.

The three dimensions of being have absolutely no substantial existence or valid ontic status. The three dimensions’ names refer to three different perspectives

on nondual awareness; identical, empty and formless in essence, intellectual—conceptual—differentiation of the unitary field of experience creates an illusion of separate mental, energetic and physical qualities. While ‘feeling’ the actuality of the three dimensions, in an oft-repeated phrase they are known to be ‘neither united with nor separated’ from. This phrase describes the nonseparation and nonidentification of the three aspects of being (the three dimensions), as well as the nonseparation and nonidentification of sentient beings and buddha.

These three separate but identical aspects of the experience of reality (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya) are perhaps best represented as symbolic syllables—white OM, red AH, and blue HUNG, but for the ordinary lay devotee and especially for the adept of mahayoga they are represented by three symbolic anthropomorphic forms, generally Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara and Sakyamuni. The essential identity of these three is symbolically restated in the congruity of their graphic proportions (*tiktse*). These three sublime forms, like the five sublime forms of present awareness considered below, and indeed the entire forty-twofold mandala of the peaceful deities described in terms of Vajradhara or Vairochana’s reality, are to be understood as symbols of the light that invests them as their own immaculate nature. For that reason *kaya* has been translated herein as ‘sublime form’, a term intending to evoke an immanent luminosity. The three sublime forms are at once the three dimensions of being and the three sublime images that symbolize them. To stretch the meaning of the word ‘congruity’ to include similarity of metaphysical attributes, the forty-two peaceful buddha-deities of the Vairochana mandala are congruous. Further, each of the buddha-forms comprising the mandala subsumes all the others.

The Vision of Pure Presence

In the reality of pure presence, everything is light. In the ineffable nondual essence of all experience as pure presence, everything is light. In the first moment of apperception, the totality experience of light is called ‘the primal ground’, ‘the zero dimension’, ‘the essence of dharmakaya’, ‘all-inclusive envisionment’, and ‘present awareness of the now’, and that is symbolized as Samantabhadra or Vajradhara. In a second moment of apperception, that ultimacy is called the union of spaciousness and awareness, sublime form and awareness, which is symbolized by Samantabhadra *yab-yum*, Samantabhadra in union with his consort Samantabhadri (male and female naked blue buddha forms). In a third moment, it is referred to as the two dimensions (dharmakaya and rupakaya), or three dimensions ‘trikaya’ (dharmakaya, sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya) symbolized as Amitabha, Avalokiteshvara and Padmasambhava. In a further moment, the forty-two qualities of sambhogakaya arise, and they are symbolized as the forty-two peaceful deities.

The forty-two deities are conceptual and visual reifications of aspects of the totality-experience of pure presence. Every totality-experience is the same and

in its entirety, herein, it is called a 'sublime form'. In the forty-twofold vision, those elements are radiant sambhogakaya forms of the timeless moment in dharmakaya, sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya dimensions. Such spheres of radiance are symbolized by buddha-forms, the images that are described in the Vairochana mandala. In the culturally conditioned Tibetan mind no distinction between the anthropomorphic image and the synchronistically arising timeless moment of pure presence exists. Here, in the *Tiklay Kunsel*, 'sublime image' and 'sublime form' are denominated by a single phrase.

Therefore, the mandala of Mahavairochana comprising the principal and his retinue, forty-two buddha-deities⁸ in all, described in this tantra, are not to be visualized and cultivated and 'practiced' through recitation of the mantra that is the euphonic form of Vairochana. It is not raw material for mahayoga practice. Rather, the mandala is a symbolic representation in anthropomorphic terms of Dzogchen nonduality manifesting in forty-two different aspects or 'qualities'. However the qualities of these forty-two buddha-deities are depicted, all of them, without exception, represent the ineffable nondual nature of being, the empty purity of pure presence that is the nature of all experience. These forty-two symbols all invoke the spontaneous all-inclusive envisionment of the primal ground, which is the unitary field of self-aware spaciousness. Their enlightened qualities, their specific symbolic characteristics that are indicated by their names and the dimension to which they belong, are secondary to what the meaning of their congruity indicates—namely, the unitary, self-aware nature of the display.

The application of anthropomorphic symbols in various buddha forms in an elaborate three dimensional mandala pattern, however, irrefutably confirms the category of this tantra as nondual Vajrayana (*gsang sngags*). How then are we to perceive the mandala in the frame of radical Dzogchen divorced from buddhist roots? The answer is as simple as the Dzogchen view. According to that rigorously uncompromising gaze, we identify our nondual nature as the root and source of all experience whatsoever, of all samsaric and nirvanic phenomena, and enjoy that vision of reality as existential reality. The mandala as a field of internal appearances, a sambhogakaya phenomenon, is a complex three-dimensional symbol of colored light and form representing each and every timeless moment of awareness.

Then allowing the intellect primacy for a moment or two, we can name the parts of that vision. First we visualize Samantabhadra as the cognitive emptiness and Samantabhadri as the spacious mudra of the here and now. Then employing the metapsychological categories of classical Buddhism we name the five cognitive components of present awareness and represent them as the five sambhogakaya buddhas of sublime form in a mandala pattern. At the center is the totality of lightform represented as Vairochana, white in color, the essence of fear; to the east is the ultimate vajra stability of awareness represented by Akshobhya, blue, the essence of rejective anger; to the south is the sameness of

every moment of awareness represented by Ratnasambhava, yellow, the essence of divine pride; to the west is the ‘discriminating’ or ‘differentiating’ aspect of awareness represented by Amitabha, red, the essence of desire; and to the north is the all-accomplishing, immanent actualizing quality of awareness represented by Amoghasiddhi, green, the essence of jealousy.

Still identifying with the present awareness and looking figuratively from the inside out, what we are looking at is corporeality and its environment, and, to label the categories of its components, we use the qualities of the five great elements which are represented by the *yum*-consorts—the mudras—of the five sublime buddha forms. Thus, the space that provides extension for accommodation of oneself and the environment is represented by Vairochana’s blue consort Dhatishvari, who, like all of the five consorts, is inextricably and inseparably united with her consort. The apparent solidity of the elements of all our experience is the ‘solidity’ of earth, providing cohesion, represented by blue Buddha Lochana in union with Akshobhya. The heat or temperature of phenomenal experience is the heat of fire providing vitality, represented by Amitabha’s red consort, Pandaravasini. The fluidity of experience is provided by the moisture of water, represented by the consort of green Amoghasiddhi called Samayātara. The motility of phenomenal experience is provided by the ever-moving, kinetic nature of air, and the power of wind represented by Ratnasambhava’s yellow consort, Mamaki. Vairochana’s consort, Dhatishvari, the space element, is omitted from mention in this mandala in Chapter 28, perhaps because she represents its emptiness!

Before leaving this section devoted to symbology visualized in Dzogchen, it should be noted that in the definitive textural elucidation of reality that is the *Tiklay Kunsel*, word choice is of paramount importance. Beside the revelations that evoke the vision of nondual reality, Vajradhara rationally defines his terms (e.g. in Chapter 96), and provides synonyms and related vocabulary (e.g. in Chapters 7, 9, 12 and 27), and he also explains them by metaphor and simile (e.g. in Chapters 13 and 90). If metaphors and similes employ verbal symbols to juxtapose distinct ideas, through the very paradox that they induce the nature of mind tends to shine through, as in a Zen koan. Such resolution of duality may sometimes imply that the cultural, or tantric, specificity therein has been superseded and a technical knowledge of nonmeditation has been gained.

The Non-Gradual Approach

From the evidence of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, the conclusion is inescapable that Dzogchen belongs to Vajrayana Buddhism. The entire tantra is written employing a buddhist vocabulary and assumes that the reader has grounding in buddhist concepts and its metapsychology. No doubt remains that this nondual vision has been produced in a buddhist culture, and a suspicion arises that an education in that culture is a necessary grounding for Dzogchen. In regard to the eight lower buddhist approaches this suspicion is immediately allayed,

however, by the assertion that the eight graduated paths are treated in terms of view, meditation, action and fruition merely to assert their redundancy. Since the views of the graduated path all retain concrete reference points due to biased interpretation of the two truths—relative and absolute—in Chapter 36 the tantra says '[such] views do not facilitate recognition of self-sprung awareness and, therefore, are mistaken, perverse views. Corrupting reality and deviating from it, those views are the wishful thinking of desirous minds.' Thus it is made clear that their value is strictly limited, that the graduated path is not just provisional but in the uncompromising Dzogchen view fundamentally flawed, due to the insuperable obstacle of goal-orientation. It may be inferred, moreover, that the graduated path belongs to the plane of socially-engaged culture, which due to its glutinous nature constitutes part of the problem rather than the solution, and also that in the radical Dzogchen frame the benefit to oneself of cultivating the relativistic aspects of life—economic, political, social, academic, family, artistic or hedonistic—is nugatory.

It appears, then, that Dzogchen arises out of the mud of the lake of Vajrayana as a miraculously generated pristine lotus of enlightenment, and as such that it is possibly separable from Vajrayana Buddhism. The mud of the buddhist lake, by extension, may be analogous to the mud of all religion—Hindu, Christian, Taoist, Muslim, Shamanic and Jewish.

The *Tiklay Kunsel*, an explanatory tantra of Vajrayana Buddhism, however, can be understood as an archive of didactic information relating to the very highest buddhist approach. This approach is Nyingma Dzogchen atiyoga when viewed objectively—from the outside—but since from an internal perspective atiyoga consists in subjective practice as no-view and no-meditation, it cannot be called an 'approach'. Rather, it is a definitive pointing out of buddha. What purpose, then, have the chapters of pithy paragraphs defining the eight Nyingma graduated paths under headings of view, meditation, conduct and fruition, for example? The text itself provides the answer: They constitute a provisional teaching that is the means to its own transcendence and may be considered, therefore, as a Trojan horse for definitive Dzogchen.

In the Dzogchen view, the distinction between provisional and definitive meaning is of crucial import; the definitive precept points directly at the nature of mind, facilitating experiential confirmation of it. Provisional precepts, on the contrary, provide a cause of change to the ambient conditions, change that may or may not be considered a desirable advance on the previous stance. Consider the distinction between provisional and definitive view, where for example, in the bodhisattva approach each of the ten stages to buddhahood is taught as superior to the antecedent stage, whereas in the Dzogchen view each stage is a definitive expression of the nature of mind and as such is identical to both what came before and what comes after, each immediately transcending itself. Further, the provisional precepts of the lower approaches are causal, designed to achieve an antidotal effect, a rebalanced condition, which allows a greater

degree of light to shine through, or to alter the personality to a more socially amenable condition. The motivation is thus altruistic and designed to change the world for the better. To the contrary, Dzogchen, with nonaction as its defining attribute, is ultimately accepting, providing the definitive nondual view. The distinction between provisional and definitive meaning and expression defines the difference between the eight approaches and Dzogchen atiyoga. Thus Vajradhara declares in Chapter 36, 'I and my emanation shall relate the views of the eight gradual approaches along with a critical overview that reveals the distinction between the provisional and definitive view.'

If such a distinction seems to be a poor excuse for including the analysis of the eight gradual approaches in the tantra, Vajradhara proceeds to introduce compassion as his motive, albeit relative compassion, compassion with an object. The object of compassion in this case is all other sentient beings, and his motivation is qualified by the codicil 'with hidden intent'—the hidden intent that is Dzogchen no-view and no-meditation. The hidden intent is accomplished by means of the critical overview revealing the identity of provisional and definitive, relative and absolute. On the surface, 'out of compassion' implies the allowance of goal-oriented practice to alleviate the pain of samsara and to ameliorate inexorable karmic effects. In the radical Dzogchen context, although this might appear to undermine the principle of nonaction and the assumption of the starting point as the goal, in the here and now even goal-oriented activity on the graduated path is susceptible to the realization of the nature of mind in a synchronic moment. In that moment of recognition, compassionate activity with an object becomes the ultimate aimless compassion of Dzogchen. In that moment, alleviation of the pain of those who are unable to recognize the nature of mind in this lifetime becomes the spontaneous response to universal necessity. For this reason the eight paths of sadhana practice are also included in the Dzogchen mandala.

Likewise, 'out of compassion' the graduated paths are taught, for example, to those who treat tantra as a method of attaining mystical states of union through sexual congress. For them Vajradhara allows the practice of uniting gender opposites in anuyoga, but here, still in the light of Maha Ati, to the extent that we lean towards surrendering to the sexual impulse and through it sate the need for oneness, ego-loss and bliss, to gain that end we admit a necessity for change through spiritual practice and allow deliberate action. With an open-ended approach to sexuality and sensual pleasure, however, the vast spaciousness of Dzogchen may be experienced synchronistically.

For those fascinated and pleased with visualization of buddha-archetypes, recitation of their mantras and liturgically orchestrated ritual worship, Vajradhara allows the practice of mahayoga. The samadhis and trances that are induced thereby may provide an illusion of nirvana, but it is only a temporal reflection, a momentary and relieving escape into a chimeric world of what could be while ignoring what is. But the devout meditator lost in his world of

spells and phantasies is also included in the radical Dzogchen mandala, which has *no* parameters whatsoever.

For those who believe that physical discipline, purity and order are essential to enlightenment, Vajradhara allows outer tantric practice. Here the esoteric arts and sciences of the New Age—with some justification—find their home. But regardless of the degree of rigor, intensity and intelligence applied to it, or indeed the amount of intuition in a relaxed and spaced-out frame, although this discipline engages only the relative world of personality and lifestyle, Dzogchen is accessed in a sense of lightness and ornamentation.

For those who find that antisocial seclusion facilitates realization of the blissful emptiness of being, Vajradhara allows cantankerous hermits—who have only partial understanding—into the mandala. Self-realization arising spontaneously in an urban ghetto or in a forest retreat is a wonderful and amazing achievement. And although co-emergent with that sense of success may be a grouchy personality, Dzogchen and the nature of mind is present with the sense of dance and playfulness.

For those who believe that renunciation and incarceration in a monastery or retreat center is a lifestyle that produces conditions supportive of the realization of the nature of mind, and that cultivation of social virtue and the rejection of negative social behavior is the first step upon a ladder that reaches to a state called ‘buddahood’, Vajradhara is accommodating.

In short, every lifestyle, meditative practice or view is ‘abhorred’ by dharmakaya and immediately eliminated in an innate recognition of the nondual nature of all dualistic experience as elucidated in Chapter 3. Here the ‘abhorrence’ implicit in dharmakaya implies an immediate dissolution of whatever dualistic perception is encountered. To the extent that dharmakaya is innate, in reality, no objectification of pleasure or pain, no thought or emotion, can ever survive its abhorrence.

The Bardo

‘Bardo’ is the name of the intermediate space-time of felt experience when delusory four-dimensional space-time (‘the natural bardo’) begins to give way to recognition of the nondual nature of mind (‘bardo of dying’), when it is resolved in its nondual nature (‘bardo of reality’) and when it reverts to samsaric duality (‘bardo of becoming’).

Thus in a fourfold division of the bardo, firstly we have existence in samsara with experience of conventional space-time, where lies the possibility of a rainbow body, which is called ‘life’ (the natural bardo); secondly, the termination of life-force within the body that is the inevitable end of life, which is called ‘death’ (‘the bardo of dying’); thirdly, recognition of nonduality and the nature of mind after death which is called ‘the bardo of reality’; fourthly, the

experience of waiting in limbo preceding return to the samsaric wheel of life, the return that is called ‘rebirth’ (‘the bardo of becoming or possibility’).

All this bardo experience arises out of the primal ground and dissolves back into it. Causal analysis of these states will inevitably obscure their noncausal reality, and result in a perception of them as a sequential flow; but existentially they are separate and distinct and it is in that perspective that they assume high significance in Dzogchen. Likewise, any apparent intellectually imposed causal relationship between elements of each bardo cloud the possibility of those different elements providing symbolic indications of integral visionary experience. With or without causal connection between them, the descriptions of the four bardos can provide a vague map for exploration of entheogenic experience.⁹

The bardos themselves are dealt with only cursorily, in Chapter 84; but in succeeding chapters some aspects of bardo experience are thoroughly examined. First, in Chapter 85 the difference between the relative mind—what we call here the intellect—and present awareness is explored; experiential knowledge of this distinction is crucial because so long as confidence in the intellect dominates and overrides the intuitive knowledge of the nature of mind, the bardo of reality will remain a hellish pandemonium and cacophony and there will be no release.

Release is the topic under which bardo experience is treated in successive Chapters 87-89, describing the various types of release experienced by individuals of varying capacity. Confidence in release, it should be remembered, is Garab Dorje’s third incisive precept, predicated upon the first—recognition of the nature of mind—where confidence implies the certainty that release occurs spontaneously, naturally and effortlessly; here it occurs by itself whatever the individual’s capacity. It is as if the several descriptions of release were all describing the same event except in different degrees of sophistication and discernment. However, the difficult chapter on The Four Alternatives, Chapter 94 (difficult only for those without knowledge of buddhist logic), refutes the possibility of release or nonrelease and so on.

The Text and the Translation

The Tibetan title of *The Circle of Total Illumination* is *Thig le kun gsal chen po'i rgyud* (pronounced *Tiklay Kunsel chempi gyue*). The Sanskrit title is *Tilaka sarva kāla mahātantra nāma*. It is a Dzogchen explanatory tantra of the atiyoga class belonging to the Secret Precept Series. The title is capable of various translations. The literal translation, *The Circle of Total Illumination*, may refer to the text itself, which according to the description of its own purpose elucidates all tantras, or it may refer to the existential self-illuminating reality indicated by its title, a notion more aptly contained in the phrase *Everything Is Light*.

Dzogchen and Vajrayana

To address the topic of the origins of Dzogchen and the source of the Dzogchen tantras, we could usefully introduce what could be considered the principal difference between the great religions of Asia and the religions of the People of the Book—the zealous monotheists. The relevant distinction in this context is the recognition and conceptualization of reality (or God) as nondual in the former and its dualization and sometime anathematization in the latter. In the western christian world, despite persecution and genocide, gnosticism (nondualism) constantly raises its head, while in eastern Orthodoxy it always had a covert acceptance. To the extent that the great religions of Asia and the people of Europe have understood nondual experience to be the ultimate existential stance, and that all human beings are endowed with the light of the mind, we may reach the conclusion that nondual experience is the ground of being and the source of all religion ‘Nonduality’ is to be understood in terms of the unitary experience of subjective and objective aspects of perception that devolves into the ultimate reality or nondual awareness of the here and now. Thus we begin with the propositions that an awareness of nonduality exists in all cultures and that some people everywhere fully recognize the nature of mind in every perception and these people are called mystics or yogins and yoginis.

To carry those assumptions into a discussion of the origin of Tibetan nondualism in a chronological, historical frame, Dzogchen may have had its genesis outside Buddhism—although no substantial evidence of its existence anywhere other than Tibet has been discovered. It became assimilated to Tibetan Buddhism only in the Empire period, because it was useful, useful for Buddhists who had recognized the nature of mind, who had had the epiphany of nondual reality, and whose lives had been transformed by initiatory experience. Thereafter it became ‘carried’ by Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism.

The crucial later development was the recognition of Dzogchen at the apex of buddhist attainment. Dzogchen, ‘the great perfection’, was no longer a mystical condition arisen spontaneously or synchronicitously in the heart/mind of susceptible people, but rather it was the reward at the end of long and strenuous path of spiritual activity in a mundane context. In other words, if ambitious priests or monks were sufficiently motivated on a relative level in virtuous activity and particularly mechanistic meditation, they would attain a nondual state, which was called Dzogchen. Dzogchen then became the carrot waved by the mundane priesthood before the noses of their followers and particularly their ambitious successors. The stick, of course, was the threat of rebirth and its inherent suffering on the wheel of life.

This brief overview of the development of Dzogchen ignores the questions that have exercised the intellect of scholars concerning its origins. What part did the pre-buddhist Bon of Zhangzhung play in the establishment of the nondual tradition? Had Orgyen (Uddiyana), the birthplace of Garab Dorje and Padmasambhava, developed a formal religious acknowledgement of nondual reality? Did the Bon already possess a form of Dzogchen when Bairotsana

returned to Central Tibet with the Nyingma Tantras? Or did the shamanic Bon simply appropriate Dzogchen lock, stock and barrel, from the Buddhists? In the absence of textual material, answers to these questions must be mere conjecture.

The Nyingma Tantras

The Nyingma tradition regarding the source of their original tantras begins with the adiguru Garab Dorje, who, it is said, gathered eighty-four thousand verses of Dzogchen scripture in his Orgyen homeland a few decades after the parinirvana of Sakyamuni buddha. Garab Dorje taught them to his disciple Manjushrimitra who divided them into the three sections of mahayoga, anuyoga and atiyoga. Manjushrimitra taught them to Shri Singha who taught them to Bairotsana, the monk who had been sent down from Tibet to India by king Trisong Detsen, and who now took them back to Tibet. We are quite certain Bairotsana translated much of the Mind Series texts during the reign of Trisong Detsen and that the Indian savant Vimalamitra from Bengal translated the remainder of the Mind Series some years later. The origins of the Space and Secret Precept Series are less clear, although in many colophons—in the *Tiklay Kunsel* for example—Bairotsana is given as the translator. The institute of translation that eventually invested the Samye monastery engaged Indian panditas to work with Tibetan translators to translate the large corpus of buddhist texts that included many Dzogchen texts.

Thus the old Nyingma tradition has it that the tantras originated in the Indic literary sphere and were translated from Indic sources. The assumption is that the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the compendium of the old tantras, maha, anu and ati, was completed by the end of the empire period. After the beginning of the second period of propagation of the dharma in Tibet, with the renaissance of the Nyingma school and the beginning of what could be called Tibetan historiography, legend and myth became history. We know that catalogues of the old tantras were made in the 12th century by Nyangrel Nyima Wozar's school and by the Zur family in Central Tibet. In the 14th century Ratnalingpa made the first comprehensive collection, which was edited and improved upon by Jigme Lingpa in the 18th century. In 1982 the National Library of the Royal Government of Bhutan published a photo-offset edition of the collection kept by the Tsamdrak monastery and it is that compendium called the *Nyingma Gyuebum* that is the primary manuscript source of this translation.

But in general, the temporal origin of the Nyingma Tantras, in distinction to their existential source, is as unclear as Tibetan history. The Tibetan Yellow-Hat school has pouted doubt upon their authenticity, asserting that they had no Indian, sanskritic antecedents. Contemporary western scholarship is still equivocal. Perhaps sanskritic sources existed, but we have no knowledge of those original texts and most likely the Tibetan 'translations' were recensions of oral transmission. Certainly the Mind Series tantras translated by Bairotsana

and Vimalamitra were extant in the 8th century Empire Period, the putative initial period of the propagation of Dzogchen in Tibet. But in the absence of hard evidence, Western scholarship has overturned the traditional view that the tantras originated with a historical Garab Dorje to be transmitted and organized by his disciple Manjushrimitra. The notion of a single source in either Sakyamuni Buddha or Rikzin Garab Dorje with a single lineage with a didactic accent upon nondual mystic experience is rejected as apocryphal myth.

One western revisionist academic view is that the Mind Series tantras were written down in the 8th century by Tibetan masters and constitute early, pure, Dzogchen. The Space Series, and the Secret Precept Series, it is said, were written down by lamas between the 11th and 14th centuries under the influence of the ethos of the new tantras emanating from Nepal and Bengal, particularly the *yogini tantras* and the *Kalachakra Tantra*. The later Dzogchen tantras, it is suggested, have lost the radical flair of the Mind Series' view. Incorporating many different meditation practices, such tantras produce the sense of a graduated path, or rather a path wherein graduation and immediacy are brought together.

To be more specific, this academic view disdains the generally accepted wisdom that the tantras were transmitted orally for hundreds of years until, at a time of threat or degradation, they were written down. It implies that Dzogchen had no Indic antecedents, that Dzogchen is a Tibetan innovation. Further, this view suggests that the *Nyingtik* lineages of atiyoga developed from and with the Space and Secret Precept tantras, that Longchenpa organized them in the *Vimala Nyingtik* and the *Khandro Nyingtik*, and that Jigme Lingpa's *Longchen Nyingtik* is the final product of that development. This view accords with the evident tendency of post-Great Fifth Dzogchen, as evinced in the *Longchen Nyingtik*, to introduce 'preliminaries' into atiyoga sadhana, and to include a variety of meditations such as those described in Chapter 42. It is difficult to avoid the highly significant implication that as part of this development *togal* practices were added to the basic Dzogchen that is *trekcho*, or, alternatively, that *togal* was separated from *trekcho*, providing two integral stages, *trekcho* for the quietist, contemplative yogin, and *togal* for the more energetic adept.

Further, it may have been during the second period of propagation that the mahayoga and anuyoga (the creative and fulfillment phases of Vajrayana) were classified as Dzogchen. These innovations defined a graduated path, and if the imperative codicil to Dzogchen sadhana is that all spiritual practice must be recognized in its nondual essence, Dzogchen had found a niche in ordinary goal-oriented Vajrayana. In this form it was incorporated into the Nyingma monastic academies during the Yellow-Hat theocracy that in the three centuries leading up to the Chinese invasion of 1959 enforced its cultural ethos upon Tibet.

This view of the development of Dzogchen is seductive for those Dzogchen yogins who would revert to the earliest form of Dzogchen, to the Mind Series tantras, to inform their view and meditation. But the textural evidence to support this theory is so thin that the entire thesis must be relegated to wish fulfillment. The very few texts that have been dated from before the 11th century—and that includes the Dun Huang stash—are certainly insufficient upon which to base any generalization about the development of nascent Dzogchen. When speaking of Dun Huang, it must be remembered that it was a military outpost of Tibetan buddhist culture thousands of miles from the central valleys where Bairotsana and Vimalamitra had taught, hardly representative of the entire culture. Besides, such academic views relying upon the evidence of extant texts ignore the traditional beliefs that embody higher didactic, soteriological, purpose—does any didactic purpose exist in western academia other than academic contention? Further, it is self-evident that textural sources and academic commentary are of secondary significance in tracing the history of a universal mystical existentialism, traced in the ‘perennial philosophy’. In the light of highly unreliable Tibetan historiography, the absence of textural material, the existence of conflicting beliefs in the various traditions, and even different approaches within the Nyingma school, any discussion about the history of Dzogchen in Tibet even after the 11th century is fanciful to tenuous.

Classification of the Text

Several versions of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the canon of the original works of the Nyingma School, are extant. The version edited by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in 1975, called the Tinkyé (*Gting skyes*) version, is divided into three sections: atiyoga, anuyoga and mahayoga. The atiyoga section is divided into three: Mind Series (*sems sde*), Space Series (*klong sde*) and All-Inclusive (*phyi nang*). The *Tiklay Kunsel* is found in the last section among seventeen of the highest tantras. In the Tsamdrak (*Mtshams brag*) version, the text that I have relied upon primarily for this translation, the *Tiklay Kunsel* is located in the thirteenth of fourteen volumes of the atiyoga section. The colophon of the *Tiklay Kunsel* declares that it is an explanatory tantra of the Secret Precept Series of atiyoga.

The three principal forms of literary expression in Vajrayana are tantra (*rgyud*), agama—scriptural instruction (*lung*) and upadesha—secret precepts (*man ngag*). Tantras are the root revelations of Vajradhara or Samantabhadra that present categories of teaching in a textbook form, listing and defining. Tantras are like databases from which general instruction and specific precepts, and also liturgical meditation texts (*sadhanas*, *sgrub thabs*), may be drawn. The *Tiklay Kunsel* provides an excellent example of such a tantra. The agamas (*lung*) turn the tantras into logical idealized instructional treatises, a process that can be seen clearly, for example, in the distinction between the tantras of the *Spaciousness of Vajrasattva* (*Nam mkha' che*) and its agama (*lung*) the *Fifty Five Verses* (see

Appendix 3 of *Everything Is Light*, the latter a clear and practical elucidation of the former. The upadeshas, like the tantras in dialogue form, are personalized instruction in short pithy slokas and since predominantly they point at the nature of mind, they are 'secret precepts'. These three—tantra, agama and upadesha—comprise the atiyoga section of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*.

No self-evident attributes distinguish the three classifications of texts called 'the three series'. Various traditional commentators have imposed different threefold interpretations upon them. Perhaps Dudjom Rinpoche¹⁰ expresses the mainstream view: 'The Mind Series teaches that all experience is free from the necessity of improvement because it is inseparable from mind itself. The Space Series teaches that multifarious reality cannot be striven after and all antidotes are redundant because all forms are already perfectly gathered into Samantabhadri, the matrix of reality. The Secret Precept Series teaches that all attributes are free of both the necessity for improvement and any antidotal application because they are perfect as they stand.' At another time, Dudjom Rinpoche firstly connected Mind Series to realization of appearances as Mind, secondly Space Series to realization of emptiness, and thirdly Secret Precept to experience of the nondual nature of appearances¹¹ and emptiness.

Another frequently imposed differentiation is between tantras of view in the Mind Series, tantras of meditation instruction in the Space Series, and tantras of pith instruction on nonduality in the Secret Precept Series. Enlarging upon that classification, Chogyel Namkhai Norbu relates the three series to the adiguru Garab Dorje's three incisive precepts: Mind Series to 'recognition of mind's nature'; Space Series to 'familiarization with mind's nature'; and Secret Precept Series to 'confidence in release'.

Such differentiation undoubtedly has didactic significance, but a simpler and more acceptable explanation is that the three bodies of texts were derived from three lineages associated with three separate original locations appearing at different times, each having its own appropriate features. This assumption does not conflict with Dudjom Rinpoche's assertion that the Mind Series appeals particularly to those attached to mind, that the Space Series appeals to those lost in space and the Secret Precept Series appeals to those with aversion to the graduated path.

Leaving behind this difficult issue of classification of the tantra within the frame of the three series, if we were to place the *Tiklay Kunsel* within the New Tantra system of father, mother and nondual tantra, although little evidence of the type of conduct mooted in the yogini tantras can be found, no literal interpretation of tantric precepts, no maithuna (sexual yoga) or tanagana (literally 'raping and killing'), no reliance upon dakinis (except as evoked in the Prologue and in Chapter 91), no lower tantric magic, but rather a father tantra equilibrium with an accent on verbal definition, logic and proof, it would have to be placed in the nondual class. The female deities of the mandala, however, are numbered

one less than the male. But that is a subsidiary symptom of the nondual theme that runs throughout in an overarching and dominant manner. Nonduality is the mode and nonduality is the key.

In support of the hypothesis that Secret Precept Series' texts were influenced by the New Tantra upsurge from India beginning at the end of the 11th century, and to provide a further definition of 'secret precept' (*man ngag*), note the inclusion of the 'mantric precepts' in some chapters of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, precepts that certainly have no place in radical Dzogchen. In addition, the prologue, with its list of wrathful dakinis fresh from the cremation ground, would indicate second-propagation tantric influence. The inclusion of the Vairochana mandala is strong evidence of mahayoga influence, although the purpose of its inclusion in the *Tiklay Kunsel* appears to be symbolic expression of an indescribable vision rather than an encouragement of the mahayoga practices of visualization and recitation. Likewise, emphasis upon the empowerments indicates nascent integration of this later Dzogchen with Vajrayana. Inclusion of Chapters on the bardo is another indication of late and also terma influence—no reference to the bardos appears in early, Mind Series, tantras. Garab Dorje, Manjushrimitra, Shri Singha and Bairotsana are the names found in early Tibetan Dzogchen history that are mentioned herein.

In support of the proposition that the tantra belongs to a late period of composition, consider the elements of the *Longchen Nyintik* that can be identified in incipient form in this tantra. No overt division into *trekcho* and *togal* phases of Dzogchen praxis can be found here, but the definition of unpremeditated nonmeditation at the beginning of Chapter 42 may be construed as *trekcho* precept and in the threefold training in meditation of Chapter 42.3 the elements of *togal* shine through.¹² 'Constriction of energy channels' (although no mention of any posture has been found), 'the three gazes', 'the three skies', 'lamp of enlightened mind', 'the water lamp', 'precious *tsitta*', 'pixels of spaciousness', all provide material for the elaborate ritualized meditations of latter day Dzogchen.

The pure 'early' Dzogchen view, however, can be filtered out of this tantra to provide a wonderful uncompromising introduction to nondual envisionment (see *Everything Is Light: The Quintessence*¹³). No distinction therein is to be made between the *trekcho* phase (recognition) and the *togal* phase (fruition).

The geographic and cultural origins of the tantras may appear to be academic issues, but if the source of the *Nyingma Gyuebum* tantras is established, we know the origin of Dzogchen, and the argument between Buddhism and Bon regarding its genesis is then largely resolved. Again, that may be an academic issue. The source, the age, the language and the culture all add up to interesting peripheral temporal data. What looms as crucial is the integrity of the entire Dzogchen vision and, particularly, the validity of its view, the efficacy of its nonmeditation and the consistency of its adepts' conduct. Does Dzogchen

transcend its cultural context? What is its current relevance? Is its nondual view optimally rigorous and uncompromising and impervious to intellectual dualization? Is its vision congruent with the experience of contemporary nondual adepts?

In conclusion, regarding the classification of the *Tiklay Kunsel*, the attributes of none of the three series fit it unequivocally. Insofar as the essential Mind Series tantras tend to be rigorous and uncompromising in their view, if a tantra that appears ostensibly to belong to the Mind Series leans towards the Secret Precept Series, it must fall within the purview of the latter. Further, the *Tiklay Kunsel* is replete with slokas that unite the dualism of form and emptiness, and awareness and spaciousness, and in that respect its classification as a Secret Precept text is validated.

Structure of the Text

A covert sectioning of the first fifty-seven chapters is provided by Vajradhara's nine samadhis, all of which, however, are to be discovered within the first forty chapters. The names of the samadhis provide the topic and source of Vajradhara's exposition.

First is the samadhi of all-inclusive envisionment, which is the totality-vision of the primal ground. In Chapter 2, the mystical apogee of Dzogchen is described in terms of zero-appearance and zero-dimension, where zero-appearance is the ground of all vision, the essence of dharmadhatu, and zero-dimension is the primal ground, the essence of dharmakaya, which in union arise out of the primal ground as nondual envisionment.

The second samadhi, Chapters 3-5, is the samadhi of the characteristic of the primal ground, the samadhi of the very ground itself, which is well defined in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, a secondary samadhi, the visionary state of metaphorical interpretation, evokes the primal ground by means of twenty-seven metaphors. It then reverts to the samadhi of the primal ground in order to provide an extensive definition in Chapter 5, wherein Mahavajradhara the Sixth, 'intrinsic presence' (*rang rike*) is included along with a list of words that are virtual synonyms, or aspects, of the envisionment of the ground.

The third samadhi, the samadhi of clear present awareness of the now, and Chapter 6, define present awareness and its five aspects, while Chapter 7 provides metaphors for it.

The fourth samadhi, and Chapter 8, introduce compassionate creativity, the creativity of pure presence, as the five attributes of present awareness. In Chapter 9, the definition of creativity is further elaborated: it manifests as the great elements, the body-mind aggregates, and all of illusory enchantment, and again in Chapter 10 there is a definition and metaphors.

The fifth samadhi, the samadhi of ornamentation and display is defined with metaphors in Chapters 11-13.

The sixth samadhi is of structured perception or the samadhi of the origin of samsara contained in Chapters 14-21, including the nature of delusion and its origin, samsara and kalpa, and the relationship between the great elements and sediments, and the three kalpas.

The seventh samadhi, Chapters 22-35, embraces the sublime vision of trikaya, beginning with the manifestation of the form dimension within the formless, including the actuality of conversion, the thrones, the mandala circles, sambhogakaya and tulku.

The eighth samadhi, in Chapters 37-56, explains the inconceivable revelation through which the eight approaches are described. The common attributes of the eight approaches (and also the ninth—atiyoga) are defined in terms of conduct, meditation and view, fruition, and definition, in that order, but without an implied necessity of one preceding the next. Vital content on nonmeditation and the Dzogchen view are treated therein. It concludes with Chapters on The Supreme and Supremacy and on Deviation and Obscuration.

The ninth samadhi, beginning at Chapter 57, the samadhi of the paramount secret, subsumes the remainder of the text. If ‘the paramount secret’ is taken to refer to tantra, then after the petition of Vajrapani to Vajradhara, and the excellences, Chapters 57-61 treat qualities of tantra, agama (discursive instruction based upon the tantra) and upadesha (secret precept).

Chapters 62-70 first define tantra and then treat the ten necessary components of tantric practice, beginning with an extensive treatment of empowerment, continuing with SAMAYA-commitment, the two mandalas (Mandala in Chapter 66 and Selfless Activity in Chapter 67), offering and yoga, mantra and mudra, and approach and accomplishment, all defined according to the Dzogchen view. These ten may be usefully compared with a Longchenpa list of ten: view, meditation, conduct, spiritual levels, SAMAYA-commitment, path, ideal conduct, subtle realization, pristine awareness and the goal.¹⁴

Chapters 74-82 consider further categories of tantra reappraised from the Dzogchen point of view: ‘stages’, ‘paths’ and ‘perfections’, and also ‘hollows’ and ‘appearances’.

Chapters 84-95 treat the bardo (an inclusion that has no antecedent in Indian buddhist literature) and associated topics, focusing on the various modes of release. The highly significant seminal Chapter 86 treating ‘the fourfold pointing out’ is inserted between bardo related topics without any apparent connection with the foregoing or following chapters. Chapter 90 lists questions and answers relating to release—an unusual didactic strategy—while Chapters 91-92 define nirvana, the product of release. Chapter 94 on ‘the four alternatives’ approaches release through logical dialectic.

Chapter 95 touches upon the *nadashastra*, the science of relationship between sound and conventional meaning. If this relationship as presented appears at first glance to be arbitrarily devised, at least this chapter establishes the root of all sound as the unspoken vowel sound *Ā*. Chapter 96 is a useful lexicon of miscellaneous technical terms used in the text, while Chapter 97 comments upon the text itself.

The mantric precepts, called *man ngag*, upadesha, in the text, preface the chapters that introduce the samadhis, although in some chapters the mantras are placed unpredictably. The mantras themselves are composed in very poor ‘Tibetan Sanskrit’, a term that implies unconventional spelling, an absence of elision and grammar. However, overlooking the odd forms of the mantras, unlike the classical secret mantras composed of a string of sacred syllables these ‘pith precepts’ have some discursive meaning. These mantras are brought together in Appendix 4 of *Everything Is Light*.

Any logical sequence of chapters, or groups of chapters, is sometimes difficult to discern. Chapters treating specific topics are not always in sequence; definition of topics that would logically appear before the revelation of the topic sometimes follows its exposition. These inconsistencies and the absence of formal structure may imply an absence of forethought in the composition of the tantra, as if the tantra were an aggregation of notes taken during oral expositions!

One particular chapter form appears throughout the text including a conventional buddhist logical analysis of a given topic, providing classifications of essence, semantic definition, category and metaphor. The chapters structured accordingly are indicated by ‘Definition’ in the chapter heading. Thus, for example, in the first eleven chapters, those headed ‘The Primal Ground’ (Chapters 3 and 5), ‘Present Awareness’ (Chapter 6), ‘Creativity’ (Chapter 10) and ‘Ornamentation and Display’ (Chapter 11) are structured in that manner. Other chapters are devoted to key words and synonyms (Chapter 27 ‘Sambhogakaya: Key Words’; Chapter 32 ‘Trikaya: Key Words’); metaphors (Chapter 13 ‘Ornamentation and Display: Metaphors’); or lexicons (Chapter 96 ‘Clarifying Definitions’).

The Form of the Text

This tantra is presented in the form of a dialogue between Mahavajradhara and Vajrapani. Mahavajradhara, or simply Vajradhara, is often called The Sixth, the buddha added to the five sambhogakaya buddhas, the origin of them all. The Sixth is an adi-buddha, a primal buddha, and although his iconography is more elaborate he can be identified with Samantabhadra, who sometimes stands above him. Vajradhara’s principal epithet throughout is ‘Bhagawan’, which means ‘Beyond Victory’, an epithet of Sakyamuni Buddha, for certainly Vajradhara is identified with the buddha of our era. The first words of the first

chapter of this tantra echo the sutric phrase that introduces texts believed to have been spoken originally by Sakyamuni Buddha: 'Thus have we heard'. Vajradhara is also repeatedly referred to as 'Teacher', an epithet commonly reserved for Sakyamuni, but this 'Teacher' is a mere personification of pure presence, dharmakaya and trikaya, and as such cannot be specified, substantiated or concretized.

Vajradhara responds to the questions of Guhyapati (Sangdak), Master of the Secret of Nonduality. But Guhyapati is also referred to by Vajradhara as Vajradhara and also as Vajrapani. In Tibetan, Chakna Dorje (Vajra-In-[honorific]Hand), Lakna Dorje (Vajra-In-Hand) and Dorje Dzin (Vajra-Bearer) are all translations of the Sanskrit name, Vajrapani, while Dorje Chang (Vajra-Bearer) refers only to Vajradhara. Guhyapati's alternative names are applied apparently at random throughout the text. Incidentally, Guhyapati is also a name of Ganesha, the elephant-headed guardian of the gates of the mysteries in Indian mythology. Vajradhara also refers to Vajrapani as Vajrasattva; Vajradhara personifies dharmakaya while Vajrasattva belongs to sambhogakaya or nirmanakaya.

Vajrapani, one of the three bodhisattva-protectors of Mahayana Buddhism, is a wrathful bodhisattva belonging to the vajra family. Vajrapani is also the epithet of a lama who has achieved the status of tantric priest in both name and spirit. But Master of the Secret (Sangdak, Guhyapati) is his most common epithet and as such he is regarded as the compiler of the Nyingma scriptures and particularly compiler of the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*. In chapter 97 Vajrapani is identified as Garab Dorje or at least it is implied that the latter is an emanation of the former. Garab Dorje's name is adduced as a master of uncorrupted transcription of the oral teaching, written in lapis lazuli ink in original texts. Also, in the tantra's colophon, he is exhorted to transmit the tantra to his disciples.

The dialogue, then, is between personifications of pure presence and functional reflex, between a buddha personification and his bodhisattva emanation, between a fully perfected buddha and a disciple who aspires to clarification of that relationship, between the unitary field of nondual mind and a moment of self-expression of it, between a totality personification and a magical emanation of it.

The language of Vajradhara's instruction may be characterized as pith instruction to the extent that buddha-word can be broken down into single sentences with an integral meaning. For this reason alone, the tantra can be classified as 'secret precept', but more meaningfully those precepts largely require nondual insight to be understood and are therefore 'self-secret'. Further, elements of the text are couched in a coded language (*sandhyabhāṣa*) that can also be called 'secret precept'; this includes primarily the instruction on meditation in Chapter 42 and the narratives in Chapters 14 and 85.

The Terton and the Translators

According to the lineal tradition, Garab Dorje, a native of Orgyen, was the first Dzogchen tulku, the adiguru of the Dzogchen lineages. He collected eighty-four thousand Dzogchen verses and as holder of three lineages of transmission taught them to his disciple Manjushrimitra. One tradition states he lived shortly after Sakyamuni buddha; according to Western academic reckoning, he lived in the 7th century. Garab Dorje is mentioned in the *Tiklay Kunsel* as recipient of tantra from Vajrapani, and as a siddhamuni in the human realm. If Garab Dorje received the tantra from Vajrapani, he should be considered not only the adiguru of the lineage but also the first treasure finder (terton)! Regarding the disparity between the traditional Tibetan and the western academic belief in the centuries of his lifetime, the latter conceives of linear time, while in the traditional Dzogchen view the linear continuum is analogous to the skin of a fruit and the subjective perceiver to the fruit's juice. Discrepancy is inevitable. The traditional view holds some wisdom for the Dzogchen yogin; the materialist view provides data that allows an illusion of control.

Shri Singha (Pelgyi Senge) is one of the principal lineal masters in the Indian Dzogchen lineage. He was a disciple of Manjushrimitra and the guru of Bairotsana. Little verifiable biography exists regarding him in the oral, lineal, tradition, other than that he taught Bairotsana and provided him with at least some of the Secret Precept Series texts. Legend and terma indicate that his homeland may have been on the Silk Route, and that he spent years in China, particularly at Wutai Shan, the mountain home of Manjushri. That he travelled to Orgyen and to Bodh Gaya and lived in those places of pilgrimage is entirely credible.

Bairotsana (Sanskrit: Vairochana) was one of the first five monks ordained by Shantarakshita in Tibet. He learned Sanskrit, travelled to India with Tsang Lekdrub, obtained tantras from Shri Singha, returned to Tibet and translated some of the tantras of the Mind and Secret Precept Series and taught at Tri Song Detsen's court. He was the first of Tibetan Dzogchen adepts and perhaps the greatest. Certainly, the translations ascribed to him are pre-eminent, lucid and clear.

Linguistic Style of the Text

The text is written in a mixture of prose and verse. The lines of verse generally have four feet. Infrequently the lines extend to five feet or more. Sometimes pairs of lines (*slokas*) are employed; sometimes, double slokas comprise four line verses. Where slokas are not in evidence, sections are frequently concluded with repetition of the final consonant of the last word with 'o'.

No evidence in spelling, vocabulary or the form of the text indicates that it had its origins during the empire period, during the first period of propagation. This lack of evidence is not conclusive as the work was almost certainly written down

originally from an oral tradition and then rewritten or extensively edited at a later period, perhaps the 11th century. Few words that can be considered dedicated Dzogchen expression can be identified herein.

In the colophon, as if in a *note bene*, the tantra declares itself written without particles or punctuation. This truth is only partial. Sufficient particles and inflections are included to facilitate understanding by anyone with knowledge of both the Tibetan language and the tantric material. Many passages exist, however, where strings of nouns and adjectives would be better related if more particles had been included (particularly Chapter 91).

Tiklay Kunsel as a Literary Source Book

The *Tiklay Kunsel* mentions seminal tantras and agamas of the highest tantric literature. If the *Tiklay Kunsel* dates from the 11th or Jigme Lingpa century, regardless of its origins in another literary form or as an orally transmitted tantra, the tantras mentioned in Chapter 60 should be recognized as vital sources of inspiration at the beginning of the second period of propagation. The same should be said of the Mind Series tantras named in the text which are presumably part of Bairotsana's translation. (See Appendix 3 of *Everything Is Light*.)

The *Tiklay Kunsel* has been a constant source of reference down the centuries. For example, Longchenpa cited the *Tiklay Kunsel* at length in his auto commentary to the *Neluk Dzo*,¹⁵ particularly from Chapters 40 ("Dzogchen View") and 88 ("Release"). See both the endnotes and Appendix 3 of *Everything Is Light* for detailed references.

Issues of Style

In definitive textural elucidation of the nature of mind such as this tantra, words are of paramount importance, and together with Vajradhara's revelations pointing to a vision of nondual reality, the terms he uses are defined and also explained by metaphor and simile and elucidated by lists of synonyms and related vocabulary.

An elaborate glossary of English-Tibetan terms can be found at the back of the book, but any reader interested in the precise meaning of Dzogchen technical terms is strongly advised to turn to those pages *before* reading the translation so that a taste (*raas*) of the terminology and also a sense of the depth and complexity of meaning in Dzogchen can be comprehended.

Whereas the tantra in Tibetan consists mostly of verse, the translation is done mainly into prose, although important passages that lend themselves best to verse have been translated as verse. The prose translation allows interpretive elaboration of the sparse Tibetan verse ("without particles or punctuation"),

allowing the addition of implied adjectives and synonymous phrases that amplify comprehension.

To assist the reader, the chapter headings, given in Tibetan at the conclusion of each chapter, have been modified and essentialized in translation to reflect more precisely the chapter contents and placed at the head of the relevant chapter. The forms of some of the questions asked of Vajrapani have been edited to fit more precisely the answers in both placement and style. Also, see Appendix 1 of *Everything Is Light* for a rationalization of the upadesha 'mantras'.

One small distinction: no difference exists in Tibetan between the meanings of 'metaphor' and 'simile', but a distinction has been introduced here. As the dictionary has it, a metaphor insists upon the identity of two incongruous things, while a simile only suggests similarity by use of prepositions such as 'like'. In Tibetan, the tantra employs both constructions while using the same term (*dpe*) to describe them.

Rather than suggest meanings for the many metaphors and similes introduced in this tantra, annotation has been avoided except where the metaphor is technical and requires elaboration, such as 'like camphor' or 'like aconite'. Unelaborated, the metaphors become koans, or methods to nonverbal resolution.

This section's heading, Issues of Style, also embraces difficulties of English translation that are sometimes fudged by translators—particularly the translators who have specialized in Vajrayana texts—leaving readers to fall into errors of view that later are hard to expunge. To mirror Tibetan literary exposition of the Dzogchen view in English, the sense of immanent fruition should be implicit. The view, a description of reality as it is, rather than a prescription to rectify it, describes things as they are rather than how they should be. Since recognition of 'what is' requires no imperious or urgent command to 'do' anything, the imperative mood is used frugally in this Dzogchen translation.

Further, the meaning of some terms is altered from conventional Vajrayana to Dzogchen usage: for example, 'pure' (*dag pa*) or 'immaculate' (*rnam par dag pa*) here implies 'sunya', 'empty', and may be translated as such. The crucial buddhist word for 'emptiness' (*stong pa nyid*) sometimes appears in the tantra, but the word for 'pure' (*dag*) appears frequently. Purity is emptiness. Likewise, 'impurity' (*ma dag*) conveys essential substantiality or rather belief in the substantial existence of putative external entities.

Consider the Tibetan word *rang*, which is often translated as the reflexive 'self' when its meaning is much better expressed by 'intrinsic' or 'natural' or 'spontaneous'. *Rang dbang* translated as 'self-empowerment' is an absurdity when understood as empowerment of or by the self instead of 'intrinsic empowerment'. Empowerment can only be received in an absence of self. 'Self'

in English has a strong sense of ego, an I, an *ens* and a substance (and subservience to the dakini is to be considered the most effective antidote). Again, no such entity as 'self-realized buddha' exists; all buddha is realized only by and as nonself. If any trace of self-nature in the body-mind remains, buddha is automatically excluded, the realization identified as that of a pratyekabuddha at best. Further, all buddha is realized without any internal witness, without any self-consciousness, without any person to say 'I am self-realized' or indeed 'I am realized.'

Self-evidently, the translation of *rang* as 'one's own' is open to the same criticism, particularly in the phrase '*rang rig*', which rendered as 'one's own awareness' or some such formulation, questions the nonduality of *rikpa*. Pure presence (*rikpa*) cannot be possessed or owned by any one, nor cognized by any witness. Where 'self' is used reflexively it must always be understood as 'by itself' not 'of itself, as in 'self-sprung', where 'self' implies that 'it' is being pulled up by its own bootstraps, or an envisionment is being engineered intrinsically, by itself, not by 'the self' or by 'an other'.

Then, regarding the simile 'like the reflection of the moon in a pail of water': This common buddhist trope is not calculated to invoke the moon in the sky as the actuality of the reflection in water. The point of the simile is the unreality of the reflected image of the moon in water—its illusory nature. Introduction of the word 'reflection' and the inevitable inference of a 'real' source serve only to muddy the water, particularly when the 'reflection' has no 'real' source. The image is likened to 'self-envisionment', self-sprung out of the primal ground with no substantial nature and no extrinsic reference.

Consider this salutary story of a Zen monk afflicted by a demon that approached and abused the monk whenever his meditation was about to reach a point of breakthrough into nondual vision. Unable to resolve his sense of self, he became obsessed with the notion of killing the demon. The next time the demon appeared, he lunged at the apparition with a knife, but plunging the knife into its gut he found he had committed hara-kiri. What the monk saw outside was a reflection of his self. When we consider the environment a collection of separate substantial entities, 'an alien other', what we see 'out there' is a reflection of our own egoistic delusion; it is a shade of maya. Such recognition is important in the process of realization of the ultimate identity of subject and object. When the delusory distinction between inside and outside has been lost, in a natural envisionment of spaciousness the sublime vision in the now arises, and that can be described as an 'holistic light-seed', or as maya in nondual vision. This self-sprung envisionment leaves nothing extrinsic, nothing other, nothing alien, nothing separate. That is the universal self-envisionment that is revealed as the basic mystic vision of Vajradhara in Chapter 1.

'The sublime vision in the now', mentioned above, is how in Dzogchen the word *dgongs pa* is rendered, and that is a definitive statement describing buddha mind. In the suppositional approaches, the word is done as 'enlightened intent' implying that there is an effect to be attained in consequence of a cause. Another word that can be translated differently in Dzogchen is *yon tan*, which in the lower approaches means a 'quality'; in Dzogchen where all experience remains as pure potential it never reaches a stage of concrete definition. Regarding conversion (*'dul bya*), in Dzogchen there is no one nor no thing to convert. If the question 'Who or what is to be converted in the confusion of samsara' arises, it is answered by the 'The unitary field of awareness is being cognized at this moment as the product of conversion, and has not been and cannot become anything else.' 'What is to be recognized as envisionment in the primal ground?' And the answer must be, 'All experience is always self-envisioned in the primal ground.' In the nirmanakaya dimension no buddhas nor sentient beings exist, no buddhas who have attained the goal of enlightenment nor sentient beings who have not. No enlightened lama appears to magically convert wayward beings lost in samsara; the only possibility is a recognition of the essence of all phenomenal experience as perfect in itself. And that realization alone is sufficient to 'convert' or 'transform' the individual sentient being, and that is the sole method at our disposal on the path of immediacy.

The danger here is the assumption of an 'I' that performs the action of conversion of another being. That assertive sense of an 'I' precludes any kind of Dzogchen conversion whatsoever. The conversion that one person does to another is better termed 'entrapment', or 'mental imprisonment within a belief system defined by a spiritual aristocracy that seeks to control and exploit', which, surely, has been the mission of errant priests since time immemorial, and is customarily misrepresented by them as 'loving kindness'.

The translation of 'nonverbal' or 'supraverbal' awareness' as 'wisdom', the wisdom that is a function of nonconceptual realization, results in a lack of clarity about the nature of mind. To believe that the dualistic mind's rational understanding of the secret of trikaya, for example, is anything but a trick of the demon of divine pride to prevent actual experience of it, leads to an inevitable sense of confinement in the cavern of karmic propensity. It is taught herein that the eight lower buddhist approaches employ mind as a vehicle, where 'mind' is relative mind, expressed in analytical and comparative thought-form. The ninth approach, atiyoga, which is no-approach (because we are already there) to the contrary, is concerned with pure awareness—present awareness—that has no form at all.

The *Tiklay Kunsel* is clear in its intention at the outset: it sets out to reflect the highest visions of Dzogchen tantra, not to inform the intellect of truths whereby enlightenment can be achieved. If truth is verbalized, it is the radiance of the creativity of pure presence that has meaning; if the form of the moment

is divorced from its radiance and given any extrinsic significance, it becomes a demonic intrusion from an alien environment, or the obtrusion of an underlying ego seeking to protect itself from dissolution in universal present awareness. Thus, mere intellectual understanding is not only an obstacle to present awareness; it is an error that leads us deeper into dualistic mire, and confines us there.

Protection

Despite its assertion that it is the key to all the tantras, all the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the *Tiklay Kunsel* does not lay any heavy stricture of entrustment and secrecy upon its readers. Perhaps this is due to the understanding of the meaning of 'secret' as something that by its very nature remains hidden in a place from which it can never be brought out into the common light of day for any curious intellect to peruse, as opposed to something that is hidden only for so long as its existence has not been revealed. Nevertheless, if placed knowingly in the hands of someone who would abuse it, the Executioner has been primed to slay the transgressor. Tibetan sectarianism has not taken root in the West sufficiently to give this petition much relevance, and neither has the jealousy of the devotees of any lama curdled to the extent that texts or teaching are considered exclusive to that group. Perhaps the adjuration to protection is simply a heads up to sanctity or sanity.

Realizing Illusion: Maya Yoga

As the tradition of Dzogchen has gained ground in the West, it appears to have produced two quite distinct responses. At best, a recognition of the natural state of being—the nature of mind as known in direct experience—is ineradicably induced. Taking ‘the position of consequence’, yanking themselves up by their own bootstraps as it were, those who know the Great Perfection simply by hearing an introduction to it recognize the spaciousness of pure presence. Then another response, from people who approach reality timorously, is awe and devotion. They meet the lineage-holding lamas like petitioners in the court of an oriental despot, knocking their heads on the floor, begging for a crumb from the high table. Then transported to an apogee of radiance through the lama’s grace, the supplicant basks in splendor until the moment arrives to return to the source for more.

The first response enables and enacts the immediate recognition of radical Dzogchen while the second reaction is a precursor of the gradual path of latter-day, elaborate or ‘cultural’, Dzogchen. The first relies upon existential experience and the precepts of atiyoga contained in the ancient texts and the second depends upon a relationship with the father-guru, upon mahayoga meditation practice and the religious life. In the first case an assumption is rendered that the nondual awareness of pure presence is the natural state of being and that nothing can be done to attain what is already reality. In the second case, the least confident and most humble of our assumptions about ourselves is that we are hopelessly lost in the mire of this birth yet we have glimpsed a bright light out there, far away in the distance, and we have identified an honest guide able and willing to direct us on the path towards it. The view on the second path—that we live in the relative world of shadows and seek the absolute realm of light—is in apparent discord with the radical Dzogchen view—that we are already in that inexpressible nondual reality in which absolute and relative are one. The difference seems as basic as that between chalk and cheese—the gradual and immediate paths are incommensurate.

In *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* Longchenpa allays any suspicion that the gradual and immediate paths are mutually exclusive, and that people from different worlds entertain them. Rather, the difference appears to be between different personality types recognizing the same reality but from different perspectives, describing the same experience in radically different terms leading to different responses and different approaches. This distinction is surely quite superficial, like the difference between the two sides of a single coin. In the

view of Longchenpa in this treatise the gradual and the immediate paths are the two sides of that same coin; they may be as far away as the earth is from the sky but they complement each other. If mahayoga with its elaborate ritual meditation practices of visualization and recitation is taken as the method of partial fulfilment of the goal of the gradual path and atiyoga is seen as the source of the precepts of immediate realization, then likewise mahayoga and atiyoga complement each other and on the graduated path may be performed either in series or in parallel. In the *Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease*, the first two volumes focus upon mahayoga and elements of the gradual path while *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* provides the keys to immediate realization and the radical view. In this introduction I have tried to highlight the atiyoga aspect. The admission of the unity of gradual and immediate allows the humility to admit to feet of clay and to the function of purification, while permitting the confidence based on the undeniable existential experience of Garab Dorje's first incisive precept that is conducive to maintenance of the secret praxis of Maha Ati.

So this short treatise of Longchenpa is a manual of primal awareness in the great Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. It provides the precepts that may instantly illuminate the buddha-reality that is our ordinary everyday experience. It asserts that we are presently under the spell of magical illusion and that by recognition of that fact we are, instantaneously, released from a conceptual cage into an enchanting reality that is pure pleasure itself. This is a manual defining human life lived as enchantment, where the ignorance of delusory samsara proves to be the insight into the Great Perfection of illusion. We begin in the heat of desirous attachment to our egoistic selves, and merely through recognition of our deluded condition, chilled out in the birthless and deathless space of reality, we find respite and release in the magical display of our everyday life.

The working title of this translation has been *Chilling Out in Enchantment*, a rendering of the Tibetan title that expresses the nature of the cool contemplation behind all our moment-to-moment twenty-four/seven experience. It is this contemplation that provides the sense of vast mystery, exhilarating and uplifting, to release us from the heaviness and density, the confusion and pettiness, of samsaric existence. This title also carries the sense of a resolution of the dilemmas of dualism in a respite of relaxed, carefree refreshment, basking in the sun of intrinsic awareness. Through the precepts contained in this manual (published as *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* in deference to scholars who have worked on the text before me) we familiarize ourselves with the natural, illusory, state of being, this state of wonderment, living a selfless phantasm of sensory pleasure and aesthetic appreciation.

This book, therefore, is about the nondual reality of Dzogchen as magical illusion, as *maya*, and I will use that exalted, profound, vernacular Sanskrit word in this introduction to evoke the magic and mystery, the light and the love, of

Dzogchen. Maya, then, is the very nature of Dzogchen, nondual reality itself. In *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* the Tibetan master Longchenpa—a second buddha—in eight chapters of high Tibetan poetry elucidates and evokes that reality while exhorting us to recognize its immanence through the Dzogchen precepts of atiyoga. The precepts that govern the recognition of the maya of everyday existence, the maya of ordinary mind, are woven like a magic spell into the elucidation of the eight famous analogies of maya collated by the great Indian pandita Nagarjuna—another second buddha. All our experience of life is like last night's dream; it is like a magic show of an infallible master magician; it is like optical illusion; it is like a mirage in the desert; it is like the reflection of the moon in water; it is like an echo reverberating between mountain crags; it is like a cloud land which we call the city of the gandharvas; and it is like an apparitional emanation, like a phantom or a ghost. Thus this book is a manual of atiyoga that opens the door into Dzogchen's nondual reality, the reality of maya—magical illusion, happiness.

Maya and its Aspects

First, then, let us look closely at Longchenpa's notion of maya. In the first sentences of the work, in his chapter on dream, maya assumes two aspects. The first is the basic immaculate maya that is our original, natural, state of being. It is this nondual maya of our self-illuminating awareness that constitutes our innate three-dimensional buddha-being inseparable from its intrinsic primal awareness. This unitary reality presents itself spontaneously and perfectly in every instant of the here and now as an integral part of the cosmic whole, like a hologram. This is the maya of the Great Perfection and in its nondual awareness it lies beyond the intellect.

The second aspect is the delusory maya created by the intellect, known as the maya of false conception. This maya arises within the space of immaculate maya as a loss of the natural intrinsic awareness of our original state of being, and we call it ignorance. This maya unfolds as the wheel of life. It is embodied as one of the six mythic modes of being (or six psychological types) each in its own mental environment. Here the laws of karma operate, and according to our activity in our own personal environment we suffer the pleasure and pain of our daily existence. As the primal awareness of immaculate maya is increasingly adulterated by attachment to the daily round, so the function of mind that we call the intellect increases in its capacity to structure and differentiate a reality that is vast unstructured space. The nondual reality of our immaculate original state manifests as the dualistic space-time world that we know in our everyday experience and which physicists and psychologists examine in their laboratories.

This maya of our ordinary experience rests upon the structure that our intellect imposes. This is a diverse and complex system of concepts and beliefs that not only determines the quality and nature of our experience but also of the natural,

seemingly external, world. This belief system and the maya of experience that it manifests, however, is never cloven from the vast expanse of compassionate clear light in which it arises. The ‘maya of false conception’ and the ‘basic immaculate maya’ of our natural state are one. The Dzogchen precepts in this manual provide the means of recognition and realization of this great truth. Longchenpa’s eight analogies provide the doorway back into this our intrinsic natural state of being. Recognition of the basic immaculate maya defines the immediate radical pathless path of Dzogchen while the maya of false conception implies a graduated structured path.

Given that our experience of life has provided a direct intuitive recognition of the nature of reality as maya, and that our concepts and belief systems, although intellectually conceived, comprehend that the purpose of our embodied being is to recognize the unity of our basic immaculate maya and the maya of false concepts, Longchenpa proposes and focuses upon four particular instances of maya. The first is the actuality of our lives that is the starting point and the goal of the transformation that is realized by experiential recognition of our true nature. The nature of this actuality is illustrated by the analogy of a magic show. Just as a magician contrives the illusion of an event out of light and sound—*son et lumière*—wherein the stage props of the illusion remain unchanged, so the delusive, spectacular, maya emerges out of the fundament of the clear light of the nature of mind. This clear light is in turn illustrated by the metaphor of the mirror that reflects endlessly yet remains untainted by the images that appear upon its surface.

The second instance of maya is the delusory, dualistic world that we are convinced is real and in which we believe. We suppose ourselves to be an objective body-mind, an ego, existing in a material world that is separate, out there, independent of the mind that perceives it. That comprises the polluted, contaminated, maya of samsara.

The third instance is the maya that is a method of decontamination, a technical contemplative means to recognize the nature of mind, an agenda that turns back the ever proliferating elaborations of the intellect upon themselves. This maya comprises religious—or psychological—dharma practice as the path.

Longchenpa’s fourth functional aspect is the maya of primordially pure pristine awareness. This is indistinguishable from the basic immaculate maya. It arises with complete ego-loss—surrender—and it subverts all sense of distinction between subjective inner and objective outer perception. Here the mother clear light (of our natural state of being) and the son clear light (of the individual’s existential realization) coalesce and the starting point is recognized as the goal.

The maya that is our experience of life is like a dream, a magic show, an echo, a mirage or an apparition and by these analogies we shall know it. The recognition of these four instances of maya, on the other hand, as the four principal or functional categories of maya on the path of Vajrayana, identifies

and clarifies the form in which maya arises—and brings it all back home. Longchenpa dwells on these distinctions in *Magical Show: The Second Analogy*, which is perhaps the most important chapter in the text. The first instance of maya is its actuality understood through the initiatory intuition of the nature of mind. In these luminous moments of insight when we stand with the buddhas; when the vast spaciousness of the ground of being is identified with the primal awareness that is intrinsic to every sensory perception, internal and external; when the nondual reality of being can be extrapolated and pictured as a magic show and the cognitive aspect described as the clear, immutable, expanse that is like the surface of a mirror: in those very moments we realize the ground of transformation out of which samsara and nirvana emerge. This is our starting point. Still cloaked in the delusions of ignorance we are fully aware of the pristine perfection of our natural state of being. Here we are fully persuaded of the perfectibility of our embodied existence. Our lives, forever changed, can never be the same. These are initiatory moments that arise fortuitously, adventitiously, in the mindstream of the individual. They are represented in the Dzogchen rituals called ‘introduction to the nature of mind’ or ‘pointing out instruction’ or ‘the fourth initiation’.

Although such moments of timeless awareness are transformative in our experience of them, the unremitting habitual tendencies ingrained by dualistic experience through the history of the human race and through our own endless succession of rebirths—through ‘genetic’ and ‘personal’ karma—we relapse into the dualistic world of samsara. Samsara is composed of an amalgam of belief systems the product of which Longchenpa terms ‘contaminated maya’. As projections upon the vast spaciousness of being we believe that there are objective ‘things’ out there in the external world with a solid ‘real’ existence and that those entities possess undeniable fixed attributes. We believe that the sun is a star in the Milky Way and that the planet Earth revolves around it, rotating upon its axis, with a satellite moon. We believe that embodied sentient beings live on planet earth, moving, eating and breathing, copulating and communicating, conscious of their environment and inner lives. We believe in an underlying integrity that fixes both the outer and the inner universes in a given, objectively and fundamentally real (true) structure. We may or may not conceive or believe that integral factor is God or the godhead and believe in Him, but we certainly do assume a fixed order in the cosmos. And certainly we believe in a compound of name, form, energies, consciousness and proclivities as a self, an ego, an objectively existent being that is born from a mother’s womb and which develops through age to experience sickness and finally death.

We ‘believe’ in the veracity of our sensory experience. Although we know first that every sensory perception is contrived by the structure (the shape and form) and the function (‘seeing’, ‘hearing’) of the sense organ as sensory stimuli impinge upon it, and, second, by the projective and interpretive cognitive functions of the intellect, believing those perceptions to be real we reify them

as objectively existent physical/mental reality. These karmically induced chronic habits of interpretation and projection may be termed 'genetic' insofar as the basic beliefs about the external world are determined by the structure and function of the psycho-organism itself. Or the notion of 'past lives' from the very inception of the species of *homo sapiens* can be evoked to indicate the unconscious depth of the psyche that produces the interpretive/projective images by which we 'know' the external world—its images, colors and shapes. Upon that fundamental structure—shared by all human beings—personal karmic experience determines the specifics of sensory perception, prioritization of features and detail, whether the sensation is to be rejected or accepted, its emotional tone, its mental environment according to the six fold mythic categorization of the buddhist tradition (human, animal, divine, demonic, ghost-like and hellish) and so on. All that projective, interpretive and selective mental activity is the work of the intellect and the constructs, concepts and thoughts that it entails are preconscious—subliminal—'belief', and we are attached to it.

Our ordinary experience, in between moments of recognition of the nature of mind, is the actuality of maya polluted by intellectual belief. The third functional aspect of maya is the illusion of decontamination, the delusion of an intentional sadhana, a graduated path, an intellectual thrust supported by a conducive lifestyle that eradicates the inveterate tendencies that relentlessly structure the immediate illusion of our experience. On a superficial, preparatory level, we can begin by shaking the bigotry of the intellect by undermining its logical certainties, its habits and presumptions. That implies a rejection—or at least a 'phenomenological bracketing'—of the overt product of the senses. The crass naïve materialist thumping the table and saying, 'And isn't this real?' is in denial of the ineluctable dominant cognitive component of every perception. Indeed in every cognitive event our specifically personal beliefs about the reality of the external world are undermined by the logic of variable sensory experience under evolving conditions. The subjectivity of our deeper, hidden, preconscious, common, shared beliefs about the external world and its presumed immutable reality are easily refuted by the proofs offered by the scanning electron microscope and by quantum theory and particle physics in the field of objective investigation. We can start the process of a reassessment of conventional, space-time pragmatic reality by assimilating the message of some contemporary art forms—painting and sculpture for instance—and some moving pictures. Then turning inward in discursive analytical meditation we can search for an essence that is substantial and permanent and yet find only emptiness.

On a deeper, subtler and more effective level of decontamination, we can utilize the uniquely Dzogchen yogas of existential deconstruction. Every sensory perception whatsoever is a 'light-form' contaminated by innate mental propensities to concretize itself as an external entity—an alien 'other'—and to react to it with positive or negative attachment. By focusing upon it as an aspect

of pure light the 'object' is deconstructed cognitively until only the light of cognition remains, leaving us nothing to hold on to, nothing to be attached to, nothing to reinforce the preconceived notion of an 'external' object cognized by an 'internal' perceiver. Turning within, the same yoga is applied to thoughts and emotions—thoughts in particular—which are also and more obviously experienced as light. In that way all beliefs manifesting as thought-forms are rendered nonaffective and effete, to be self-reflexively released at the instant of arising. The Dzogchen view provides a cognitive dialectic that involuntarily reduces dualistic thought and its forms—polarities, dichotomies, dualisms—to the elemental unitary light of primordial awareness (*rikpa*). If our experience of the nature of mind is in fact an indication of our original, natural, state of being then the rolling snowball effect is now activated and an unmediated process that deconstructs existential reality continues to overwhelm the seemingly implacable steamrolling logic of karmic propensity. It is axiomatic that the Dzogchen view is symbiotically coincident with Dzogchen meditation, or rather Dzogchen nonmeditation. This nonmeditation is the ultimate instrument of decontamination. It is indicated in the Dzogchen view as nonaction as opposed to any contrived mental action during meditation sitting. It is glossed also as 'nondeliberate activity'. Nonaction allows relaxation into the primordial purity of the ground of being where primal awareness illuminates the delusory maya that has then become immaculate maya. There is no technical meditation instruction that contrives the state of relaxation. Nonaction cannot be fabricated. No controller exists who can set himself up for dissolution and self-destruction. The surrender that culminates in dissolution is only reached through the precepts of the Dzogchen view that are truly no-precepts.

This third aspect of maya, the technical illusion, can be pictured as the magical illusion of Dzogchen yogins and yoginis striving to resolve the fantasies and paradoxes that the intellect creates. Every technique of sadhana has a starting point, a path and a goal; a beginning, a middle and an end; preparation, application, 'seeing' and familiarization. In the context of this Breakthrough phase (*trekcho*), 'preparation' may refer to repeated momentary experience of the nature of mind; 'application' to the gradual assimilation of mundane experience to the nature of mind; 'seeing' to insight into the sameness of every situation that provides a continuity of unbroken moments of pure presence; and finally 'familiarization' to the constant presence of pure presence where karma is exhausted.

It may be appropriate here to note how the paradigm of Tibetan Buddhist sadhana was assimilated by the psychedelic movement of the 'sixties. Mind-altering substances replaced simply-sitting and the processes of creative and fulfilment meditation as the arena in which the nature of mind was recognized. While it is evident that recognition is only momentary, permitted only for the duration of the effect of the chemical, such experience can act as a touchstone upon which reality may be gauged in an ongoing sadhana wherein conviction

of the 'truth' of all experience is recognized, allowing confidence in reflexive release to arise. Psychedelics remain an uncertain method of attaining a powerful experience of recognition of the ground of being. But like psychopathic states and near-death experience, they seem to be able to induce a foretaste of the nature of mind. Particularly under the rubric of shamanism they should not be rejected or belittled, especially in cultures, like the Latin American, in which the tradition of substance-induced psychedelic mysticism has existed for many generations.

The fourth functional aspect of maya is what remains experientially after all belief in any substantial reality whatsoever has been expunged. When our nonmeditation, our insight into the nature of mind, reveals the wondrous essential truth that the external world and our experience of it, and the inner world of thought and emotion, is all contrived by the intellect, that it has no substantial existence, at that time the understanding of maya dawns. Both inner and the outer are illusory. It is all magical display. It is unitary maya.

The Real and The True

It is a basic human karmic propensity to conceive the field of our experience as real and true. We believe in the reality of the objective external world and of our subjective, personal, inner world. Certainly one of Longchenpa's aims in *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* is to convince us of the falsity, the untruth, the unreality, of that belief. In common usage what is 'true' is accurate fact, confirmed by public perception (intersubjective verification), or logically consistent, scientifically attested, reasonable and rational argument. In our application of the Dzogchen precepts given by Longchenpa in *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* we are obliged to deny the factuality of our dualistic experience. We cannot break through into the intrinsic spaciousness of our mindstream unless we suspend our belief in conventional reality as real and true. Moral truth, scientific truth, assumptions about the actual content of our sensory experience, all must be subsumed under the heading of 'lies', 'falsehood', 'unreality'. The entire belief system by which we relate professionally, socially and sexually, domestically and personally, must be undermined, deconstructed and rendered ineffectual. Every belief system is hypothetical, a superficial construction, capable of replacement by an alternative set of beliefs. It is all delusion. It is deceiving, duplicitous, spurious fiction. It is a lie. In that way, by rejecting fact as 'true', we begin to relieve ourselves of the density and heaviness, not to say bigotry, of our beliefs about the nature of reality.

In religious culture 'truth' has a deeper meaning. No longer dependent upon intellectual validity or proof, no longer a function of intellectual belief, it could be defined as an intuition of a constant, unchanging, blissful reality, or wisdom. That 'truth' is god, a meaning familiar to those who have heard the chant of Hindu pallbearers on their way to the cremation ground—'Ram Ram satya hai'

'God is truth!' they cry over and over. Likewise the Muslims cry of '*Allah Akbar*' affirms that 'God is truth'. This truth that is God is the substance of belief and fulfils our craving for security, something solid to hold on to and to cling to, something seemingly graspable to which we can attach ourselves. That truth may be projected outside upon an external entity or internalized as a soul or *jiva*, an aspect of god within. The prophets—Jewish, Muslim, christian or Hindu—have verbally interpreted that truth as God's law and formulated a moral dogma and discipline—and a priesthood. When we submit to that truth and its entire, inherently limited, belief system, we accept the structures that it imposes upon the intrinsic spaciousness of mind and involuntarily we become advocates of its limitations. The principal of those imagined structures is belief in a self, an ego, a person, and that person intellectually emanates the entire dualistic structure of separate subject and object, inside and outside, I and it, me and her, mine and theirs, good and evil, right and wrong and so on. And thus nonduality is divisively dualized—conflicted—and we are caught in the god-trap. Religious culture is contaminated maya.

Of the many precepts that *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* provides, those that exhort us to see maya as delusion predominate. We should remember here that in his characterization of experience as delusory, Longchenpa is not attempting an objective worldview, a philosophy that describes man in his environment. Rather, he is giving us the tools whereby we can return to the natural state of being that is our home. In order to do that, we need to be consistently rigorous in our application of the precepts. Everything that is, all our experience up to and including mystical experience of the divine, is untrue: it is invalid, inauthentic; it is falsehood, a lie; it is fiction; it is spurious or counterfeit. It is unreal. Thus in ordinary parlance when we say 'That is true!' in response to a statement of fact we should be aware that in fact we are asserting the truth of illusion. 'Fact', insofar as it is merely a partial truth, is always a lie even in conventional reality. How more so is it a falsehood when every aspect and feature in our experience is truly or factually a deceptive untruth, a part of the Great Lie that is our multidimensional experience!

We should also be aware that intensity of belief or experience is no barometer of truth. An overwhelming epiphany of the nature of God—to be reborn in God—does not make it authentic or true, although it may be unique in our experience. Profound religious experience simply provides an example of the magnificence and beauty of maya and demonstrates its capacity to mesmerize and enthrall. Such experience is also zero-dimensional, like brushing one's teeth. Likewise, when at certain stages of life specific hormones saturate the body-mind, and undeniable attitudes and feelings dominate our being and we are moved to extraordinarily intense love or hate, to 'true love' or to fratricidal war, and we have no choice but to copulate with our sisters or to kill our brothers, there is no 'truth' in our motivation or our actions, it is all maya—delusion, falsehood, a lie. Love, for example, whether it lodges upon a person,

an animal, an object, or god, so long as we believe in its validity is always and only fiction, becoming 'true' always and only when it is recognized as an illusory ephemeral figment of mind.

We are tempted to accept this illusory world by the universal dualistic appeal of pleasure and pain and we become attached to it. Certainly we become attached to specific partial features of that samsara as 'this house and car' or 'that house and car', 'this partner' or 'that partner' and 'my career' and 'my country' and so on, acceptance of delusion as truth follows like a cart after the horse. We may accept and suffer all our experience as delusory emanation of maya and yet still maintain, for instance, that the only 'true love' is the spontaneity of compassion that perceives all as equal and does not focus upon or reside in any particular person or place—buddha-love. When this dualism of relative and absolute becomes so beguiling that our attachments are intractable, we should remember that the didactic distinction in buddhist logic between conventional (or relative) truth and absolute truth is also a formulation of the intellect, another final trick of maya. The two truths are perhaps better known as 'the two lies'. We know by universal agreement—as part of our social contract—that conventional truth has only limited validity and that what we assert as true is only valid in its context of rational causality and then only so long as it is useful. That is pragmatic truth. And, whether, like the Hindus, we accept a transcendental truth that we call 'God' who is eternal, authentic and righteous, or whether like the Buddhists our definition of ultimate truth depends upon the notion of emptiness, or as in the formulations of secular humanism upon scientific materialism, we still postulate further a reality that is absolute. Longchenpa dismisses such dualisms as constructs of the delusive mind; he often points at the nondual nature of mind and unitary maya. Conceptual projections are a seductive strategy of maya to impose a pragmatic intellectual distinction—a cloak—upon what in direct experience is utterly beyond the intellect, inconceivable, inexpressible and unimaginable.

Reality lies beyond the dualism of truth and falsehood. We may use the contrived verbal constructions of 'untruth' and 'unreality' in our meditation to shake lose the gross tentacles of belief that metastasize throughout our being, but when we begin to recognize the nature of that reality as not other than the clear light of experience, even the formula that defines that reality as beyond both truth and falsehood, fact and fiction, the authentic and the inauthentic, valid and invalid, and, finally, reality and illusion itself, is made redundant. Such is the profound Dzogchen dialectic.

The crucial point in this Dzogchen view is that maya is a nondual experience. Maya is the starting point, which is our own circumstantial situation, our personal samsara, recognized as the ground of being out of which it arises. It is, therefore, also the path and the goal. Maya is the unitary container and contents, the chalice and the elixir. The container cannot be conceived of by the contents—only intuited or 'felt'. Unitary maya is aware of itself, intrinsically

or spontaneously aware, and that awareness is intrinsic pure presence. Following Longchenpa's exhortation in his meditation precepts to regard all experience as illusion, we are left suspended in the timeless basic space of maya. Striving towards the goal of deconstruction of the intellectually contrived dualistic world through the actualization of these precepts, effortlessly, involuntarily, we arrive at the goal that has been present from the beginning. The starting point is recognized as the goal. The implication is that since recognition is the sole prerequisite nothing can be done to achieve accomplishment of this nondual maya. To regard every situation as a magic show is simply to relax into it and enjoy it. Thus—nonaction. The difficulty—the impossibility—of verbalizing nondual maya directly is surmounted by the use of the eight similes.

Maya Yoga as Atiyoga

First, in order to recognize the reality of release from the dualistic world there is an initial necessity to realize that we are stuck in it. But that dualistic recognition itself is a doorway out of the relative world, into nonduality—out of contaminated maya into immaculate maya. That recognition is an understanding of where we are and where we want to be as identical. In that understanding the relative has dissolved and the nondual is realized; the relative has gone—it never existed—and only nondual maya remains. That nondual maya we may call the unity of relative and absolute or the natural state of being. The recognition of the limitations of our subject/object dichotomy places our consciousness in the arena of atiyoga where there is only the thinnest, subtle, most transparent distinction between knowing and not knowing. In fact, both knowing and not knowing are pure presence: knowing is pure presence itself and not knowing is the effulgence of pure presence, its energetic expression. That realization is inherent in the recognition of our dualistic situation as such. Another way to say it is that samsara is nirvana only when we recognize samsara as a state of suffering. Nirvana lies in the clear seeing—in the clarity—not in the specific form that is seen when suffering and anxiety color the entire spectrum of possibility.

The specific forms that appear belong to our karmically determined lifestyle. If we are committed to the bodhisattva ideal, that lifestyle should be denominated as the gradual path. The actual form of the lifestyle is immaterial so long as it is recognized as the vehicle by which the Great Perfection is realized moment by moment. That is to say there is no specific discipline or conduct preferable to any other, or any lifestyle that facilitates the realization of the nature of mind more than any other. Insofar as all conduct is karmically determined until all karma is exhausted, whatever arises is an appropriate karma. Thus the gradual path may consist of the lifestyle of monk, yogin or layman, religious or secular.

It is irrelevant which persona clothes our body-mind or which role we play in the drama of life—a lesson taught clearly in the Mahamudra tradition of the

Mahasiddhas where any trade or profession could be used as the vehicle of transformation. In practice, however, in the Dzogchen arena we often find that the monk, yogin and layman are partial to the bias of their own karmic proclivities. Particularly, in the monastic environment the monk is closely attached to his religious activities and he tends to high-profile the disciplined compassionate approach described in the Mahayana sutras. The Dalai Lama and the Geluk Dzogchen lineage fit naturally into the monkish category, but there are many Nyingma lamas educated first in the monastery and then in a dharma academy, for example, who also advocate the sutra-oriented approach of discipline (*vinaya*) and concentration-meditation (*shamatha*) as preliminary training for Maha Ati. This generates a biased view and a judgmental attitude to the conduct of the layman, particularly the secular layman. The layman who is free of the dualistic vows of buddhist praxis, however, has greater space, perhaps, in which a true, undiscriminating, anonymous, unselfconscious Dzogchen awareness may grow.

Whereas the monk, yogin or layman will tend to stress the form of the graduated path that he cultivates, identifying with the Dzogchen path as such, he must know that the form is irrelevant in the light of nondual realization. So long as he is unaware of the nondual he will strive to attain the goals of his particular gradual path. Insofar as pure presence dominates, the goals forms and vows of his progressive path become irrelevant. To put it simply, in the Dzogchen view the difference between the gradual and immediate paths is the same difference between the relative and the absolute truth—there is none. The gradual path allows cultivation, refinement and enhancement of form and style, which may be considered ‘improvement’ and ‘progress’ but anyhow—with or without ‘practice’—it is the creativity, or effulgence, of pure presence. The radical Dzogchen view of atiyoga assumes the nonduality of spaciousness and intrinsic awareness as pure presence and in the timeless moment of the here and now never—never—can the twain be separated. Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

Nonduality is the nature of reality and relative truth is the ignorant delusion that is subsumed by it. As the tradition maintains, the distinction between relative and absolute is a delusive function of the intellect and in reality the two truths cannot be parted. If we make the gradual path distinct from what we could call the nondual path we introduce an impossible dualism into the Dzogchen view. At the time of assimilating the first of the three parts of Longchenpa’s trilogy, *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind*, which deals with the starting point wherein the aspects of the enlightened mind are progressively recognized, the danger lies in forgetting the Dzogchen view and our own initiatory experience. Likewise, if we are not familiar with the Dzogchen view, if we are not constantly aware of existential experience of the nature of mind, during meditation retreat, as described in the second part of the trilogy, we will not know nonmeditation. In this third part of the trilogy

treating enchantment, however, Longchenpa begins each chapter of analogy with recollection of the atiyoga recognition of our present situation in duplicitous samsara thereby opening up the reality of the nondual. Here in maya yoga with the realization that nonduality is the natural state of being, form and emptiness are seen as inseparable.

The term Maha Ati may denote involuntary recognition of the nature of mind in every moment of experience. Atiyoga is the last resort in the relative world before conviction in the reality of the natural state of being brings about its own intrinsic nondual actuality. It is here that the radical Dzogchen view and nonmeditation engage. This is where the yogas of Breakthrough (*trekcho*) and Leapover (*toga*), taken as a lifestyle, optimize confidence in Maha Ati. The outer and inner rushen practices, the vocalization of the syllable PHAT, for example, provide a powerful mode of deconstruction of intellectual interference in direct perception. When the Dzogchen view has been lost, the semdzins constitute a vital backup. They can provide subtle perceptual touchstones that re-open windows upon—and then doors back into—the Dzogchen view. Without contesting the precept that Maha Ati cannot be achieved through any cause or condition, here we can practice maya yoga, actualizing Longchenpa's profound instruction in Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment.

Instruction for the main practice given at the beginning of the meditation section in each of the eight chapters of analogy is essentially the same. It reiterates the crucial injunction 'Regard all experience as maya.' The instruction applies primarily to sitting meditation sessions, but insofar as it is also applicable in a moment-to-moment twenty-four hour a day meditation the instruction obviously cannot be interpreted as a directive to discursively analyze in ontological and phenomenological terms every sensory perception as it arises. Neither can it be the call for an intellectual discussion with ourself about the features of any particular perception or realization, although that should not be ruled out entirely. Rather, since every perception, objective or subjective, external or internal, is—in Longchenpa's oft repeated phrase—'absent yet apparent' the instruction provides a moment of pause, a space of nonreferential samadhi, wherein the paradox of all situations, all perceptual and mental events, being nothing yet something, necessarily and immediately evoke the nature of mind, opening into the thought-free vast expanse wherein all experience is founded.

In this way the instruction 'Regard all experience as maya' may be taken as a perceptual touchstone and the practice could be classified as a semdzin of the third category, the category that facilitates release. Application of the precept, 'Regard all experience as a magic show', for example, immediately evokes the nature of mind and opens up the thought-free space wherein all experience is 'absent yet apparent'. By analogy, it is similar to the *vicara* in Ramana Mahashi's Advaita Vedanta, where the koan-like phrase 'Who am I?' serves to deracinate the intellect. Stymied by the insoluble dilemma of the paradox of an absent yet

apparent ego, the mind must now relax into its own primordial nature. In Zen, koan practice serves that function.

In the main practice of maya yoga, sitting in silent meditation, an enduring tendency grows to advert again and again to the precept 'all experience is a magic show'. The resultant psychological dissonance is resolved only by surrender to the nature of mind. If at the outset the dissonance of that dilemma is felt only weakly, or if it diminishes through time, then some discursive elaboration may be used, like, 'This is all a dream; it's all floating in space without any foundation; there's nothing solid inside or outside; it's a conjuring trick of the intellect; it's all hallucination', and so on, and thereby a conceptual aspect of the Dzogchen view is re-established and the sense of a nondual all-inclusive supra-mental reality is entered upon. That discursive activity is curtailed as soon as even mere intuition of the truth presents itself. The experience of that intuition may at first be only momentary and we are returned again and again to the discursive mental function. Yet, since it is the intrinsic natural state of presence that we are intuiting, as we gain increasing familiarity with it, it becomes progressively easier. Longchenpa's eight analogies—dream, magical illusion, echo, apparition, etc.—serve as illustration of the 'always already' reality of the immediately cognizant experience of all events as maya, ever 'absent yet apparent'

The European Reformation fed on the perennial mystic tendency to reject complex, structured religious consciousness, priestly intercession, time-consuming eschatological ritual and scholastic dogma and abstruse liturgy. The psychedelic movement of the 'sixties brought nondualism out of the closet until today in the 'new age' there is a cognitive bias toward a formlessness of religious perspective reminiscent of the Dzogchen view. We take satisfaction, for instance, in the self-dissolving precepts of that view, precepts that interrupt the train of dogmatic discursive thought and with it, incidentally, the habit of obsessive/compulsive fundamentalist thinking so hated by the humanists. Just as the humanistic ethos that structures and determines the cognitive and moral imperatives of contemporary western culture was distilled from traditional christian culture, so Dzogchen supersedes ritualistic, gradualist, Tibetan Tantra. But like most religious traditions Tibetan tantric Buddhism is part and parcel of the culture that spawned it. So it is with the Nyingma School's *Longchen Nyingtiké* tradition, for example, which is embedded in the Tibetan monastic and priestly buddhist tradition, inseparable from the sophisticated religious ritual and cultural forms and lifestyles of theocratic Tibet; yet the radical nondual precepts that are at its very heart demand its own existential—cognitive and syntactical—deconstruction and its own transcendence. Thus we move toward a realization that the religious context is irrelevant to the essential Dzogchen quest. Why, then, should we in the Western tradition replace our home-grown variety of religious forms with Central Asian paradigms? Certainly Tibetan Buddhism is in a state of rapid transition and growth in the West and the

assimilation of esoteric Buddhism with its far-reaching multifaceted and profound metaphysical, psychological and moral implications will continue to serve and enrich western culture and benefit its people. But the Dzogchen view presupposes no specific religious-cultural base. Atiyoga precepts may be applied in any social milieu whatsoever and it is that feature that makes it—and its maya yoga—so eminently importable into western societies.

This is not true of mahayoga, however. Mahayoga is characterized as the creative process of meditation where ritual visualization of the symbolic forms of buddha-deities and the recitation of their mantras is believed to purify the karma of the meditator and also, at the ritual's conclusion, allow the clear light of the Great Perfection to arise. The foundational practice that Longchenpa introduces at the beginning of the first section on meditation, in *Dream: The First Analogy*, is a mahayoga exercise consisting primarily of 'creative' visualization and also a 'fulfilment' stage element of tantric practice. The antidote to the false dilemma posed by the intrusion of this non-formless element of meditation into the atiyoga scenario is the Dzogchen view in which relative and absolute are inseparable and where space/time is subsumed by nonduality. Here we are required to accept the small ritual of guru-yoga that through its symbolic structure and content reflects the actuality here and now of the Great Perfection. The inexpressible nondual Dzogchen view is not to be replaced by the psychology of the gradual path in which a conditioned belief system promotes a series of goals to be achieved through time wherein goal-orientation inevitably obsesses us. We should not fall into the error of conceiving that the mind-set implied by *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* rests upon the foundation that has been cultivated by the two preceding volumes of Longchenpa's trilogy. We should not err in believing that the actualization of the principal precepts of maya yoga rest upon the foundation of dream meditation. We may realize, however, that the creative and fulfilment forms of mahayoga provide moments of unfoldment through immediate intuitive understanding of their nature that spontaneously illuminate our clouded state of dualistic perception. We fall into the deep well of goal-obsession if we believe that contrived meditation through time will purify conventional maya; if on the other hand the magic of interactive visualized and conceptual symbols in mahayoga give us recognition and then familiarization with the nature of mind, this guru-yoga opens the way into the matrix of the timeless moment of pure presence.

If that explanation—or justification—still evokes the psychology of the gradual path, it may be useful to recall the traditional metaphor of the king at the center of his court. Just as a king calls upon his ministers to provide expertise and ministerial functions according to their skills and aptitudes to facilitate his projects and purposes, so the Dzogchen yogin or yogini at the center of the mandala spontaneously includes any of the vast array of skillful means and practices arranged as in concentric circles at varying proximity to him,

according to their relevance, in completing the timeless moment of pure presence. 'The king's employment of his ministers' in the Dzogchen mandala of praxis is exemplified by Longchenpa's encouragement to practice the methods that the tradition offers to deconstruct emotion (at the end of the last stanza of *The City of the Gandharvas: The Seventh Analogy*). This instruction can be understood as practice of the semdzin wherein emotion is allowed to arise under our gaze only to dissolve immediately into its evanescence as the nature of mind. In that case we remain in the arena of atiyoga. If emotions are intractable and our gaze is weak we may utilize the similar tantric precepts that transform the five emotions into the five aspects of primal awareness represented by the five buddhas. Or perhaps we engage the bodhisattva vow and the six perfections that are specific antidotes to emotional states, like the perfection of patience as an antidote to anger (at the end of *Echo: The Sixth Analogy*). In these latter cases, although we may include in atiyoga whatever skillful means the lower eight approaches provide to deal with difficult karmically induced propensities, Dzogchen atiyoga is sustained in awareness of the all-inclusive nondual nature of mind that resolves the relative/absolute intellectual dualism.

Returning, however, to the ritual meditation of guru-yoga, it is comprised of visualization of the Guru and then relaxation into the clear light at dissolution of the visualization. This eight-line guru-yoga as the central, foundational practice may seem a small matter to spend such length of discussion upon, yet it is of crucial importance. The meditation of maya yoga—particularly of the waking state and dream yoga—is realized only insofar as guru-yoga is accomplished therein. All the precepts of atiyoga are mere nominal constructions unless the reality that the guru represents in our visualization, and which guru-yoga induces, is the reality of our dharma. In *Apparition: The Eighth Analogy*, where Longchenpa rehearses the cognitive Dzogchen dialectic of all the previous analogies, in his final phase of existential deconstruction wherein even those precepts that denominate the technical illusion of maya are denied validity insofar as they are intellectually determined constructs, he provides the ultimate Dzogchen precept: only the guru's blessing can facilitate the recognition that constitutes a breakthrough into the nature of mind.

Guru-yoga develops our sense of the Guru from a venerable mentor, an embodied teacher existing 'outside' with which we have a relationship of subservience, to an internal voice or touchstone to whom we relate as a brother, and finally to the nondual reality that is the nature of mind. This reality is represented by Guru Rinpoche, Pema Jungné, the Great Guru whose emanation constitutes all our experience. His body is the form of the universe in any given moment; his voice is all sound and all vibration; his mind is the one mind of primal awareness. The guru's blessing, therefore, is a timeless adventitious moment totally free of personality and relationship. Adventitious,

constantly available, this blessing is free of linear causes and rational conditioning, so that any strategy to contrive it is futile.

Longchenpa expresses the inexpressible pure presence (*rikpa*), that is the nature of the guru's blessing through the analogy of apparition, all couched in his sublime, inimitable, poetry. If the guru's blessing is an opening of the inner eye of wisdom, then all color and form and all sound and vibration, all energy formations, provide the effulgence of the nature of mind. A word of warning (in the penultimate verse of *Apparition: The Eighth Analogy*): railing against the scholars, pundits and monks who are caught up in the logic of their habitual conceptual beliefs and belief systems and whose thoughts are understood by themselves and others to be authoritatively incontrovertible, thereby inhibiting natural radiance shining through, Longchenpa defines the ignorance that precludes the guru's blessing. The blessing, he implies, is suffused with humility.

In the lines of the colophon, Longchenpa identifies himself as Stainless Radiance (Drimé Wozer), 'the yogin attending closely at the feet of the Great Guru Pema Jungné'. Here, surely 'the Great Guru Pema' is a poetic name for the immaculate maya of mind's nature, the name that evokes the famous image of Guru Rinpoche reclining upon the pristine lotus, representing the dynamic nature of mind arising spontaneously out of the mud of the lake of endless samsara, experienced in the nonspecific form of the buddhas' trikaya. Here, at the end of his composition Longchenpa reveals that he has never been far away from guru-devotion. Nothing but devotion to that Guru allows entry into the throes of the inspired composition displayed in his work. Nothing but relaxation into the nature of mind and unity with it provides the knowledge in which the Dzogchen precepts can be woven. This 'weaving of the Dzogchen precepts in pure presence' is a fine metaphor in the context of radical Dzogchen, at the conclusion of a work on maya where spaciousness (*dbarmadhatu*) is a synonym of maya.

In the timeless moment of the guru's blessing the four SAMAYAS of Dzogchen atiyoga—absence, openness, spontaneity and oneness—are recognized as binding us primordially, involuntarily, whether we know it or not. Throughout his recollection of the precepts of both view and meditation, Longchenpa articulates the key words that evoke and affirm these SAMAYAS. In particular, maya is 'absent', its absence indicated in every use of the phrase 'absent yet apparent' that constantly points at the paradoxical nondual. With realization of the meaning of this crucial phrase in maya yoga the tendency to nihilism at worst, and the samadhi of nothingness at best—both of which contemplation of absence may unwittingly encourage—are uprooted. Maya is absent insofar as it lacks any substantiality as an ego, a soul or a 'Self'. It is nonexistent, and likewise untrue and unreal. Yet it is still sensate, apparent, visible. The force of contemplation upon absence is to nullify our inveterate propensity to conceive of substance in our perception of the external world and to 'feel' a separate

individuality, a sense of self, in our inner lives and personality. Ego-loss is contingent upon recognition of this absence.

The second of the Dzogchen SAMAYAs, openness, is evoked by its synonyms, particularly ‘emptiness’ (*sunyata*), a word that Longchenpa employs frequently, usage unusual in a Dzogchen context. Emptiness may imply an absence of any conceptual attribute whatsoever, but in its implication and connotation of open-ended light-form the term ‘openness’ has been used by some translators as an equivalent of *sunyata* (most prominently by Dr. Guenther). Further, wherever, the nature of mind in its vast spaciousness is evoked by Longchenpa’s simile of the sky, which is frequent, openness as emptiness is to be inferred.

The first pair of SAMAYAs—absence and openness—apply to the phase of Breakthrough and the second pair—spontaneity and oneness—to Leapover, the phase of fruition. In a text that deals with the practical application of the precepts of Breakthrough, the second pair appears less frequently. Spontaneity and oneness refer to the place where intellectually conceived constructs no longer apply, where karmically induced conditioning has lost its force.

The Eight Analogies

The text is divided into eight chapters, each treating one of the eight analogies, the whole concluding with verses of dedication. Each chapter is divided into sections of View and Meditation.

The section on view in each of the eight chapters of analogy begins with a reminder of the nondual reality of the clear light of the nature of mind (the natural state of being) in which the delusory condition of our ordinary samsaric experience arises. The former is called basic immaculate magical illusion (*maya*) and the latter the magical illusion of false concepts. That distinction is elaborated at the beginning of *Dream*, where Longchenpa introduces it as the starting point of his treatise—we begin by recognizing our prison of dualistic constructs. Here, also, in his description of our delusory vision he makes the distinction between the loss of awareness that arises adventitiously, simultaneously, with every sensory perception and the loss of awareness that accompanies the intellectual ideational and conceptual activity of selecting, filtering and projecting the concepts that we then take as conventional illusion. Each chapter likens our experience of the magical illusion of false concepts to one of the eight analogies—dream, magic show, mirage, echo, etc.

The distinction between the immaculate maya that is our natural state of being and the maya polluted by intellectual activity is emphasized in order that recognition of the latter as nothing other than the former may resolve the ostensible dualism between our natural state of being and our present state of ignorance. That distinction is introduced here as the basis of the understanding of the need ‘to chill out behind enchantment’. This is the skillful means of

atiyoga and allows the Dzogchen dialectic to perform its magic, beginning with the assertion that since ignorance arises in and as the pristine nature of mind, it never becomes anything other than the nature of mind. The illusion that it does become a separate reality is indicated by the diaphanous delusiveness of the eight analogies. The remainder of the sections on view in *Dream* provides an understanding of how the delusion that arises out of the immaculate natural state of being is like experience of the respective analogy, couched in precepts employing the imperative mood of the verb—‘recognize’, ‘realize’, ‘see’, etc. The final lines in each section on view return to an assertion of nonduality.

The section on meditation in each chapter treats first the yoga of the waking state and then dream yoga. Instruction on the foundational practices and the guru-yoga that are prescribed in all of the eight aspects of the waking aspect of maya yoga are given at the beginning of the Meditation section in *Dream*. After these preliminaries, in each of the eight meditations we are instructed to aspire to maya-consciousness by evoking the actual nature of the relevant analogy. This aspiration is couched in the verbal form of prayer. ‘May I recognize all my experience as dream,’ for example. It asserts the implication that the view is inseparable from the praxis of the meditation: this is axiomatic in Dzogchen. This principle may be inferred from the lack of any substantial difference in the nature of the preceptual instruction in the sections on view and of waking meditation (and also perhaps in dream-yoga). What is the difference experientially, for example, between the imperative to ‘recognize spontaneous self-existent intrinsic presence’ and the instruction ‘to let our minds settle, without fluctuation, without hope or fear in the mirage-like space of all experience (*The Fourth Analogy*)’ or ‘to settle in sameness, allowing the mind to perceive whatever arises like the reflection of the moon in water’ (*The Fifth Analogy*).

Further, it becomes evident here that the main praxis of this maya yoga is identical in all eight aspects. The distinction lies only in the doorway that we use to enter the one room. The discursive thought with which we begin the reinforcement of the insight that all experience is like a dream, for example, or that this particular moment of experience is like a dream, is a gateway into the same recognition of all maya as immaculate. The practice of dream yoga is described at length in the first analogy—*Dream*—and in a shorter exposition in the second analogy—*Magic Show*. It is only mentioned in passing in the subsequent chapters because, again, the practice remains essentially the same. Longchenpa’s purpose is that each of the eight analogies provides fresh insight into the nature of reality (*dharmā*), into all our experience (*dharmā*), every event and situation (*dharmā*), as maya. The following synopses include salient features selected from Longchenpa’s intense and dense literary style.

Dream: The First Analogy

The first chapter presents the view, meditation and fruit of maya yoga. The short section on View introduces the basic notion of maya as twofold,

immaculate maya and conceptualized maya, and then differentiates intrinsic loss of awareness and the ignorance of intellectual constructs and concepts. The precepts of view assert the unitary nature of twofold maya as the sky-like awareness that is like dream. The long section on meditation describes the meditations that actualize the insight of the view. Each session of meditation begins with the foundation of refuge and bodhi-mind and then guru-yoga. The main praxis initiated during the session of meditation and thereafter reinforced during every meditation session is the dream-yoga that is the moment-to-moment, twenty-four/seven, nonmeditation that we experience in the breakthroughs between formal meditation sessions.

Dream-yoga has two parts: waking dream and sleeping dream—the contemplation is the same. Aware of the inherent insubstantiality of all appearances, all situations, waking or sleeping, we relax into the unreality of all experience, into the reality of nondual maya. In sleep, through an absence of attachment to dream, we dream lucid dream. Here transformation and multiplication of emanation, and travel in the dream world, provide a paradigm that fulfils the purposes of compassionate pure presence. The chapter ends with a brief indication not only of the creativity that is engendered by sleeping dream-yoga, but also of the product of the twenty-four/seven nonmeditation practice.

Magic Show: The Second Analogy

It should be noted that ‘magic show’ can have two meanings according to where the stress is laid in the phrase. A *magic* show is a conjuror’s professional gig. A *magic show* is a magical display, in our case a multi-dimensional, omni-sensory, display of maya. The former is an analogy or simile of maya; the latter is a metaphorical description of it. The simile of the conjuror’s or illusionist’s performance is the analogy of *magic* show that runs through this chapter, wherein Longchenpa introduces the four instances of maya that are germane to maya yoga: the maya of our everyday lives that is the real nature of mind, yet still deceives us; maya as the deception perceived as something to be decontaminated; maya as sadhana—the praxis of decontamination; and maya as the pristine phantasmagoria of intrinsic awareness.

To illustrate that all our samsaric perceptions are the tortuous elaborations of simplicity like a conjuror’s illusion that appears as more than its constituent props, Longchenpa evokes our perception of other minds, other people. Like oneself, other people have no intrinsic substantial nature and therefore cannot be said to exist independently as a constant or even as a flash of light. We know them only as our projections intellectually larded with deep ingrained constructs and ephemeral yet habitual assumptions about them, all of which determine their perceived attributes and personalities. People are nothing more than phantasms, like those that populate our daydreams.

To reinforce the notion of the duplicity of maya, we can say that our perception of people is a lie and that our perception of the world we live in is a universal

lie. Because the recognition of those lies provide an occasion for lightness of being we can also call it a joke—a cosmic joke. Longchenpa insinuates the notion of the universal lie and the cosmic joke into the section on meditation.

Optical Illusion: The Third Analogy

The distinction should be clarified between optical illusion and hallucination. An optical illusion is derived from a visual hook that is interpreted falsely by the eye and intellect, like a black piece of cloth hanging in the rafters that is taken for a bat. Alternatively, the visual hook may become the occasion for an elaborate fantasy, like a movement of light and shadow that appears to be a scampering rat, or the milder fantasies of *delirium tremens* where wallpaper patterns appear to be invasive spiders. An hallucination is a mental projection independent of any exterior handle. It is traditionally illustrated by the compelling delusions induced by the psychotropic plant *dhatura* (thorn apple).

‘Hallucination’ could also serve as a simile of maya but Longchenpa deals here in the third analogy with optical illusion in order to undermine our belief in an apparently concrete external world. The emphasis here is on the external world as delusion because it has no core, no nuclear essence or ‘self’. Our samsaric environment is certainly visible to the senses but it is actually nonexistent, ‘absent’, because it is groundless. Examine it with the eye of insight and like optical illusion it vanishes and our rational reservations inevitably disperse. The seemingly external sensory panorama appears to be real only because of our need to perceive cognitive security in every sensory event, a process that flows naturally from our emotional validation of an ego or self in order to be free of the fear of ego loss. Thus, recognition of the sky-like nature of mind is directly proportional to our ego-loss.

Mirage: The Fourth Analogy

In his perusal of mirage Longchenpa discovers the best illustration of maya as absent yet apparent, nonexistent but visible. However, just as the rational mind stumbles and halts, spaced out, in the perception of paradoxical mirage, so looking into polluted maya as fictional delusion the mind is returned to its nondual unoriginated state. The totality-vision of polluted maya, seemingly substantial, rests upon the sense of an ego and since nothing of that kind exists as we gaze into the nature of mind, the intellect is confounded and the natural state of nirvana is revealed.

The Reflection of the Moon in Water: The Fifth Analogy

Maya is *like* the reflection of the moon in water, or *like* a reflection in a mirror. Maya is *not* a reflection of a discrete, separately existent, object. In another famous analogy evoked in atiyoga the sensory phantasmagoria is likened to the rainbow spectrum produced by the refraction of a sunbeam through a crystal. Maya may be a *refraction* of clear light, but it is not a *reflection* of a seemingly concrete object. The significance of the reflection of the moon in water, again,

is its magical nature. It appears but has no substantial existence. We cannot put a finger upon it, let alone grasp it. Try to touch an image of the moon in water and the clear reflection disperses into dazzling proliferation of ripples. We simply need to recognize it as it is.

Within the sublime calm and pristine primal awareness that is evoked by the image of the yogin sitting by a still pool of water on a full moon night contemplating the moon's reflection, Longchenpa, in his fifth analogy, moves along to introduce the notion of spontaneity and to reinforce the precept of nonaction. In this Dzogchen context the word 'spontaneity' does not describe so much the manner of appearance of an image in the pellucid nature of mind but rather characterizes the image itself. The image is not so much 'spontaneously created', implying a creator, a creation and the act of creating, but rather it is a timeless moment of inexpressible reality neither created in a temporal process nor existing as a crystalized object of creation. The maya of all situations is spontaneity, free of the limitations of all temporal concepts. Nonaction, on the other hand, is the natural state of mind in which the spontaneity occurs, implying surrender of all goal-orientation and seeking strategies. Wherever we are exhorted to just let it be and relax into the nature of mind, into unitary space, into the natural state of being, nonaction is indicated. Nonaction, however, does not necessarily imply inaction, passivity or stasis; it entails neither a loss or diminution of efflorescence nor any manner of being.

Echo: The Sixth Analogy

In the Dzogchen view Longchenpa employs the analogy of echo to evoke the nature of mind in all experience, in every event. It is not so much aural perception that is treated here but rather the similarity of echo to every sensory experience in that it is devoid of substance, and empty, having no evident source, seemingly without cause. With this recognition there is nothing further to do. There is no distinction to be made between absolute and relative because experience of the moment is beyond the intellect and nothing we may think or believe makes any difference to the reality of immaculate maya.

In the section on meditation, after exhorting us to recognize all experience to be empty like echo, Longchenpa focuses on the emptiness of all sound. Especially, he considers the emptiness of words of praise and blame in order to illustrate the emptiness of all sensory impressions whatsoever. When taking other people's words as the occasion for familiarizing ourselves with all experience as echo, besides realizing the nature of mind we cultivate the invaluable virtue of patience. Likewise, looking with insight into burgeoning emotion, particularly anger, taking it as an adventitious circumstance, like echo, cultivating the experience of all phenomena as echo, we are relieved of the conditions that produce neurotic emotional states.

The City of the Gandharvas: The Seventh Analogy

The city of the gandharvas is a land of myth, like Fairie, or Jerusalem the Golden. Like Uddiyana (where Padmasambhava was born) or Hollywood, it has a geographical location, but geography is relevant here only insofar as it

gives the vision of that city greater credibility. Like Jerusalem the Golden, the city of the gandharvas is an externalized vision in the sky. As an internal vision it is a daydream or pipe dream; externally it is castles in the air, cloudland or cloud cuckoo land. In buddhist mythology the gandharvas who populate it are celestial musicians, but again that is only tangentially relevant here.

In this seventh analogy Longchenpa goes further in his identity of polluted maya and immaculate maya. He states in so many words that the nature of samsara is nirvana. We need only recognize our sensorially designated world as space-based and we relax into the nondual primal awareness of the natural state of being.

At the end of the section on view Longchenpa prescribes a meditation for moments (and rebirths) when we fail to recognize the nature of mind in every instant of the here and now. We know intellectually that all experience is like a city of the gandharvas, a project of maya, that action is nonaction in its essential nature, and that renunciation and engaged commitment are equally delusory. But while there is a vestigial belief in a real person or an ego, a cosmic substance or a god, so long as that recognition does not kick-in existentially the ego is left with a yearning for an unrealized ideal. In that case, the recommendation is to work with the emotions, according to the precepts of Mahayana, Tantra or Dzogchen.

Apparition: The Eighth Analogy

Longchenpa would have assumed that his audience was familiar in their own lives with apparitions, whether they were ghosts of departed souls, visitations of local spirits and gods, or visions of buddha-deities and so on. Such apparitional vision was part of the religious culture of Tibet. Our western materialistic culture tends at best to discourage such experience and at worst to ridicule it. So the first lesson to be drawn from *Apparition* is tolerance, acceptance and finally surrender to the phenomena of apparition itself. This approach to maya as apparition is useful because by envisioning ghosts, for example, the rational mind is stymied, boggled, and naturally retreats into abeyance, allowing the nature of mind to shine through.

In this extensive eighth chapter Longchenpa rehearses the entire Dzogchen view of the seven previous chapters. But as a culmination of his moving focus from the external world that he treats as the primary consideration in the early chapters it is the living beings on the wheel of life that he defines firstly by reference to apparition. The living beings, however, inseparable from their environments, are coalesced into a unitary illusion that is like an apparition. The totality of this vast illusion, including its emotional content, when left alone, free of intellectual interference, is none other than the reality of our buddha-nature, expressed as the buddha-trikaya and buddha-fields, boundless openness, pure and pristine—the nature of mind. With the experientially based conviction that the entire mandala of our experience is like an apparition, we

can burn our progressivist bridges and slowly abandon the process of egoic intellectual deconstruction that has brought us to this point. The dualism of subject and object that particularizes and concretizes specific elements of our experience is no longer valid, so like rabbits' horns all our fictive imputations upon the emptiness of reality dissolve. Our opinions and preferences become a part of the universal, intersubjective, delusion and the only reality is what lies beyond ideational concepts and constructs, and the interpretive and selective functions of cognitive mind. No verbal formulation whatsoever can do justice to experience after it is recognized as apparitional light-form. Labels are for the birds. Any discussion about the nature of reality is mere speculative hot air. Even the verbal function of pointing out the nature of mind is delusion.

Maya Yoga and Dr. Herbert Guenther

Longchen Rabjampa was perhaps the greatest mind to walk the Land of the Snows. *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment*, here published under the title *Maya Yoga*, is the third volume in his *Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease*. The first volume is *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind* and the second *Finding Comfort and Ease in Meditation*. I make no apology for another translation of one of Longchenpa's seminal Dzogchen texts. Each generation of translators makes its own interpretation of such important works, each building upon the next, until a final authoritative version is reached. Even now another generation of translators has assimilated its forebear's expertise, seemingly by cognitive osmosis, and has made a giant leap towards those final versions. I hope that this translation may be of use to them; but my main purpose is to represent the precepts whereby the mystical view of Maha Ati can be recognized and its experiential understanding become available to all.

The publication in 1980 of Dr. Herbert Guenther's translation of *The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease* by Tarchang Tulku's Dharma Publishing under the title *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* was a crucial event in the publication of Dzogchen texts. It initiated a new phase of Dzogchen translation and offered a revised vocabulary for it. Concomitantly, it provided a rationalization of the Vajrayana praxis that until then had been couched in simplistic, devotional terms. To some that was a retrograde movement, insofar as it provided sustenance for the intellect, whereas this very intellect was the principal obstacle to 'feeling' the lamas' meaning. Dr. Guenther's translation of the title, the strange and evocative *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*, seemed to bring into doubt the validity of the very view it presented, to characterize it as provisional, to present a functional yet perverted sadhana. For others it deepened an intuitive insight into the nature of mind by providing an added psychological and philosophical dimension to the vocabulary of Dzogchen poetry. To some it brought disappointment by its use of the exoteric academic terminology of phenomenology that here in some places explicated but there in others tended to obscure Longchenpa's meaning—it was aimed at the philosopher-academic by a philosopher-academic rather than at the existential yogin or yogini. Those readers were

appalled by the absence in the translation of the poetic power and beauty that marks Longchenpa's work, although even Dr. Guenther could not but fall occasionally into some poetic conceits that were poignantly reminiscent of the lyrical nature of the original Tibetan. To others it established the Vajrayana vision in contemporary western cultural and philosophical tradition. Other readers were delighted to find their intellect challenged to grasp the immensity of the vast Dzogchen vision.

This critique is not intended to demean Dr. Guenther's work, but rather to distinguish it as cutting edge and controversial. This exacting, impeccable scholar had already made an invaluable contribution to buddhist studies, both theoretical and practical, before the publication of *Kindly Bent*. For me, personally, his *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma* provided a concise and profound theoretical basis for a shamatha retreat in Almora, India, in 1967, and *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation* was a constant inspirational friend during ngondro practice in the following years. In subsequent titles Dr. Guenther achieved giant steps in Tibetan translation and elucidation of technical terminology and thereby enlightened an entire generation of academics that were otherwise irked by the simplistic devotional language of Tibetan tulkus barely conversant with the wonderful subtleties, nuances and ambiguities of the infinitely flexible English language.

Certainly, in *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* Dr. Guenther provided a crib whereby his students could read the Tibetan while remaining aware of the metaphysical denotations and the parallels in academic phenomenology. It provided an excellent prop for any further translation—perhaps he had that purpose in mind. Some of his English equivalents of technical Tibetan terms, however, have become redundant like his 'creative imagination' (for *sgom pa*), or 'limpid clearness and consummate perspicacity' (for *byang chub sems*). Sometimes in my opinion Dr. Guenther erred in his reading of the Tibetan. Occasionally he spins the meaning to conform to preconceived rational assumptions, thereby losing sight of Longchenpa's ulterior intentions. Frequently his heavy-handed treatment of common buddhist terms obscures the sense of a phrase. But what is perhaps the most invidious tendency in his translation is to spin the work in the direction of an objective philosophical exposition, at the expense of the subtle and secret dimension of magical poetry. His is an interesting point of view and one that may have induced many academic seekers to delve further into Tibetan Buddhism. But Longchenpa's aim was not to provide a seamless monograph on the nature of mind, but rather to provide lucid precepts for those already on the Vajrayana path, illuminating them with his own unique and profound experiential understanding.

In spite of these shortcomings, in *Kindly Bent* and his other works, Herbert Guenther made a towering contribution to the study of Tibetan Buddhism. Besides students of Buddhism, innumerable devotees, yogins and yoginis, in the western world have cause to thank him for his life work. But one other

thing remains to be said, which may be best framed as a question. Did Dr. Guenther bring a prior intuition of the nature of mind to his work or did his work induce a realization of that buddha-nature? Whichever way the question is answered we have reason to celebrate his understanding. For these reasons I have dedicated this book to him.

In this translation of *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* I have tried to follow a middle way between a reflection of technical meaning and interpretive poetry in order to provide access to those who would use the text as a manual. Use of a manual of Vajrayana precepts is facilitated by authorization and elucidation from a master of the literary lineage: the ritual of *lung* provides that.

It is interesting to note that in scholastic circles *The Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease* is becoming the most renowned of Longchenpa's many works. Dr. Guenther began the trend with *Kindly Bent to Ease Us*. In the year 2000 the XIVth Dalai Lama taught Rigpa initiates at Lerab Ling in France. Wisdom Publications have published the second volume of the trilogy in France and his commentary and the translation under the title *Mind in Comfort and Ease*. Longchenpa's voluminous auto-commentary on the trilogy called *The Great Chariot* is in process of translation and will be published also by Wisdom Publications. *Finding Comfort and Ease in Enchantment* describes the culmination of the graduated path described in the first two volumes of the trilogy and thus lends itself to the radical view.

Gradual Is Immediate: Yeshe Lama

The great *Yeshe Lama* is the most renowned, comprehensive and the most efficacious of the Dzogchen manuals. It is a primary sourcebook of Breakthrough/Leapover precepts. When I was new to Dzogchen, the *Yeshe Lama* was introduced as equivalent to the Great Perfection itself. Its name was spoken in a whisper, like the names of the most renowned lamas of the lineage. If the basic training in Vajrayana was to be arduous, the incomparable prize was the *Yeshe Lama*. The mere sight of this book could evoke initiatory experience and its mantric title was enough to remove any obstacle or to exorcise any devious spirit. Placed on the head, its blessing power was equal to the root lama's blessing of empowerment. Presentation of an old blockprint copy by the lama could only be a sign of his special favor and confidence in his heart-son. It was the carrot held out as an incentive even before receiving basic Dzogchen instruction.

Certainly, the *Yeshe Lama* lives up to its reputation. It is still the crown jewel of the latter-day Dzogchen lineages. It is at the apex of the *Longchen Nyingtik* corpus of literature, presenting the essential Dzogchen yogas in pith instruction. The *Longchen Nyingtik* is based firmly on Longchen Rabjampa's vision, a massive, vast and profound, Dzogchen experience, written down as the *Seven Treasures*, which in turn were derived from the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, the literary treasure house of Dzogchen. Rikzin Jigme Lingpa, the scholar-mystic who composed the *Longchen Nyingtik*, was an incarnation of Longchenpa in the most pertinent sense. He wrote it down during a time of his lineage's persecution, at a low point in its history, but his *Longchen Nyingtik* became the seed, root and branch of a Dzogchen revival that reverberates around the entire world at the beginning of the 21st century.

That yellowed, well-thumbed blockprint copy of the *Yeshe Lama*, stayed in its silk wrapping for decades, but although need generated the temerity to translate it, its high significance to the lineage and its profound meaning in the Dzogchen tradition caused hesitation. What tipped the balance, however, was the sense that at this juncture of the transmission of the Tibetan nondual tradition to the West, its future as an instrument for good depends upon a deconstruction and reformation of the old forms and a resurgence similar in depth and intensity to the Dzogchen renaissance that Jigme Lingpa initiated three hundred years ago in Tibet. Such a reformation surely depends upon embodiment of the Dzogchen view, meditation and

conduct by indigenous westerners who have absorbed the transmission, assimilated it and can express it in modes, verbal and nonverbal, appropriate to their culture, and, also, sadly, relevant to contemporary fashion. This translation of the *Yeshe Lama*, made available to anyone who has the good fortune to come across it is like a conduit from the old dispensation to the new, a precious relic of old Tibet contributing to the dynamic awareness of the new. A reconsideration of the traditional parameters of transmission that became ossified on the Tibetan plateau through hundreds of years of conservative praxis may also benefit the younger generation of Tibetans both in Tibet and in exile.

In this radical view, the conservation and preservation of the secrets of the *Yeshe Lama* for a later generation take second place to providing easy access to it right now. Besides those on a traditional graduated path, also included are people emerging from Vajrayana into radical Dzogchen, people who have never had Vajrayana initiation and people who have had commitment and dedication to Dzogchen for much of their lives, and who are now preparing to die and can benefit from Jigme Lingpa's vision. Equally, it may benefit younger people who have a strong intuition that Dzogchen and the *Yeshe Lama* somehow quintessentialize the ground of the New Age ethos. It should be clear at the beginning, however, that the Dzogchen of the traditionalist lamas who teach it as a goal at the end of the path of the Sacred Word tradition of the Vajrayana, a laddered path that includes strenuous training in the religious culture of buddhist Tibet, is not the Dzogchen that is disclosed and discussed in this introduction. This Dzogchen is a genuine existential realization in the here and now that transcends all religion, including Buddhism and Bon, Islam and Christianity. It is what has become known as radical Dzogchen.

Radical Dzogchen, in its primary sense, implies a total commitment to the broad, unstructured, nondogmatic praxis of the Great Perfection in the now. Such broad praxis takes the individual's karmic patterning, genetically originated and then modified by behavioral conditioning, as the starting point, and then through recognition of the nature of our being utilizing its nonaction as the overarching precept informing our momentary experience. Embodying that precept we remain relaxed in our authentic nature. The imperative here is an involuntary recognition of the ineluctable immanence of the Great Perfection. The starting point is thus known as an unlimited altruistic spontaneity.

Secondly, radical Dzogchen implies a return to the roots of Dzogchen in the form of the iconic atiyoga tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, its original revelation. This was the prime source of inspiration to Longchenpa himself, and by association to Jigme Lingpa. Thirdly, following intimately from those concerns, radical Dzogchen, transcending all cultural forms, entails an appreciation of our own home grown cultural forms and values to an extent

even greater than those of the Indian and Central Asian cultures that first generated and then hosted Dzogchen.

Regarding the second issue, a return to the roots of Dzogchen, it must be admitted that the *Yeshe Lama* has become an obstacle. This book has become an icon, a source of dogma, a Dzogchen bible, the final word in Dzogchen precepts, and it may not be contradicted. Certainly, it deviates very little from Longchenpa's vision, and that is an enormous gift. But unless we are to make the *Tibetan religious culture* of Dzogchen a spiritual home, no less a prison, we need to jettison sacrosanct assumptions about the *Yeshe Lama*. To think of the lamas as the ultimate manipulative priests, the best in Asia and therefore of the world, priests who use Vajrayana and Dzogchen to feather their own nests, may be counterproductive, but to establish a book of final revelation, incontrovertible and irreplaceable, obviously serves the purpose of those who own and teach it. A covey of practitioners following the ladder of graduated practice, protected from the world by the walls of the mandala, social and spiritual, is the institutional danger. A priest sitting on the top of a hierarchy guarded by an inner circle that reaps the reward is the product. Religion should not be anathematized, but at this juncture in the history of humankind breaking down the walls of authoritarian institutional structures is closely akin to survival of the species.

To return to the precepts of radical Dzogchen: There is no recognition of superior and inferior grade and certainly no discrimination of high and low spiritual status because there is no recognition of a dualistic distinction between the material and spiritual, body and mind. Dzogchen, like any purely existential mode of being, is the way that we present ourselves to ourselves without choice or favor because that is how it is and how it must be. Whatever we are and whatever we do in the moment is the manner that suits us to perfection and there is no question of relative assessment or comparison—all comparisons are invidious. We may say that Dzogchen is superior to the eight lower approaches of Buddhism, or that Leapover is superior to Breakthrough (*Yeshe Lama* p. 41), but that is only true in the terms of the graduated path, which presents a provisional option to the babes who have dropped out—or, rather, who believe themselves to have dropped out—of the here and now. The experience upon which radical Dzogchen is based is sameness, the sameness of radiant awareness in every sensory perception, and that engenders equanimity and impartiality, which in turn lay the foundation for social equality with universal religious friendship and political democracy, where dogma and ideology are anathema.

Another basic tenet of radical Dzogchen is that awareness of the now cannot be engineered. We cannot be conditioned to buddha. The mind is not a machine to be programmed to awareness. Insofar as awareness does not age, performing in exactly the same way in infancy as it does in maturity and in senility, only the forms of perception change as the stages of life

are passed through and that difference in color and shape does not imply any advance in quality, moral or cognitive. Genetically-originated behavioral patterns, hormonal imperatives, habitual routine, will be determined by both the external and internal conditions of each stage of life. Lived experience may induce Pavlovian responses that improve our chances of survival and successful reproduction, but all such changes fall under the rubric of karma and are karmically determined. Cultural and religious agendas may modify our behavior patterns marginally, but, again, such change is not necessarily improvement in the conditions that provide full awareness, detachment, clarity, nonthought and the heightened sense of contentment that is the quality of buddha and nondual yoga.

Purpose and Vision

The purpose of this translation—the purpose of any translation of the *Yeshe Lama*—must be to provide Dzogchen activists, yogins and yoginis, with a manual of practice. Clear descriptions of the practices, therefore, take precedence over any scholastic considerations. Most readers will have been led to expect that the *Yeshe Lama* is as advertised, a manual of graduated practice for those intent upon attaining a goal at the end of a ladder path. Jigme Lingpa subtitled his text a ‘lamrim’, ‘a guide to the stages of the path’. From this we will be forgiven if we suppose that the *Yeshe Lama* belongs to the graduated Vajrayana path, and undoubtedly Jigme Lingpa believed Dzogchen and Vajrayana to be inseparable. But to put that proposition into perspective, only occasionally does the Vajrayana context of Dzogchen intrude in the text, and even then it is presented as a karma to be exhausted, technique to be transcended. ‘From the moment of accepting the lama as an embodiment of the three sublime aspects of the buddha in which we take refuge, until the ten principal features of the innumerable tantras are actualized, all experience whatsoever is manifest experience of fruition (*riksa*) as the path.’ In this introduction, as in the translation, the Vajrayana is taken as the religio-cultural context of Dzogchen, the cocoon out of which the butterfly will emerge, the egg out of which the garuda bird will hatch, and as such it is the equivalent of our post-christian, nonsectarian, cultural context.

In the West, dharma practitioners have reached a juncture where they question whether or not Tibetan Vajrayana is psychologically and culturally assimilable. In doubt, they look to Dzogchen and allied nondual visions. Dzogchen, the quintessence of Vajrayana, removed from its Tibetan context, and discoverable equally in all and every western cultural form, is then recognizable as the universal apex path. This radical Dzogchen resides equally in christian and post-christian culture, in the traditional and alternative family and cultural modes, in secular and religious education and media conditioning.

Jigme Lingpa may, therefore, have entitled the text a 'lamrim', but it is counter-productive to approach it with a goal-oriented mindset or with the intention to use the book as a guide to laddered practice. Insofar as we have already known initiatory experience or intimation of mind's nature, we can, in all humility, assume a posture of buddha-already-accomplished, implying achievement of the Breakthrough view. In that way, while opening ourselves to the nongraduated precepts, which form an incontestable undertow to the text, we can at the same time appreciate the full potential of the exercises described and use them appropriately without being caught up in the graduated approach of goal-orientation. This text is a clarification of our natural state of being and a reinforcement of our understanding of spontaneous liberation; in the process we must not become trapped in spiritual materialism, where materialism is the tendency to reify, pin down, possess and control whatever arises in our sensory fields. The exercises described herein promise to familiarize ourselves with our authentic selves and increase our confidence in an ungrounded, insubstantial being.

Some readers, radical in their Dzogchen, and qualified to open these spindrift pages, may be initially disappointed. Upset by the promise of its lamrim title, and expecting that this ultimate textbook of Dzogchen to address those who walk the pathless path, they will be surprised that the text does not provide the formless radical Dzogchen that they know and love. But the *Yeshe Lama* should definitely be understood as a manual of radical Dzogchen, and as an invaluable guide to the radical Dzogchen adept sitting on the throne of Maha Ati at the center of the Dzogchen mandala, and in particular an inventory of skillful means for the throne-holder who will teach it.

Radical Dzogchen assumes identity of the graduated and instantaneous. In the root insight that defines Dzogchen, there is neither graduated nor sudden experience—there is no process at all, or rather the experience encompasses them both. The manner in which Tibetan (and Western) scholasticism has expressed the distinction between the gradualists and the sudden school supposes that enlightenment can occur either over time or suddenly. This is a purely academic assumption. Existentially, there is no 'gradual' or 'sudden' enlightenment. Those labels are contrived by people observing from the outside, observing objectively and dealing analytically with what is ineffable subjective experience. For the existentialist—who in this Dzogchen context is necessarily a mystic—recognition and acceptance of nonduality reigns or it does not. Jigme Lingpa as a mystic first—and only secondly as a scholar—recognized this and said so even in his prologue to the *Yeshe Lama*. Whoever pulls the Dzogchen view apart with rational analysis is simply exercising his intellect in onanistic indulgence, like making a chemical analysis of the chocolate in order to discover its taste rather than by eating it or like gathering hearsay about whether, for example, there

are tigers in a certain jungle rather than going there oneself to discover the truth.

The danger for the Dzogchen adept, and indeed for aspirants of all eras and persuasions, is to mistake a particular cultural form for pure presence. Whether enlightenment is gradual or instantaneous is not the issue. The danger lies in mistaking the wood for the trees and assuming that a single specific mode is identical to enlightenment, and that doing any one thing will induce the Dzogchen view. It is the nature of the Dzogchen view itself that is at issue when the view—the nature of mind—is mistaken for an aspect of an exotic or rarefied religious culture. There has been a tendency in the West, over recent generations, to take the Asian religious cultures that have drawn our attention to the sickening hole in our own as a valid replacement of our own. Even if it were possible to renounce entirely the culture and karma into which we have been born and by which we have been bred, what replaces it becomes the object of attachment regardless of any greater subtlety or sophistication. Unable to free ourselves from—or at least mitigate—our inbred cultural conditioning, what benefit can arise from an added burden of cultural attachment? Not that simplicity has any inherent advantage over sophistication, but why complicate matters?

The danger lies in mistaking the finger that points at the moon for the actual moon itself. Not only the Tibetan religious culture that carries the Dzogchen precepts but the precepts themselves are the finger pointing at the moon. Likewise, the lamas who point at the nature of mind should not be mistaken for the mind itself. The culture that at a synchronic moment acted as a bright mirror reflecting our own redundant delusions is not supposed to supersede the culture that allowed us access to it. Virtually all Tibetan culture is its religious culture—its secular culture is very thin and barbarous—and to worship the gods of that culture, to take on the hierarchical, autocratic, dogmatic values of that spiritual-materialistic culture is to mistake the wood for the trees. We thank the lamas for their propitious intervention and salutary reminders of what we had momentarily forgotten, and move on. Insofar as the graduated path in the present moment of Tibetan history is ritual Vajrayana practice in the Central Asian mode, it is an obstacle, a figment of mind, no less because some lamas insist that it is the moon itself rather than the pointing finger.

This vital point needs stressing for the benefit of broad praxis, heart-essence adepts, but more pertinently for those who originally saw the clear light indicated by Tibetan Buddhism but who became mesmerized by the form and paraphernalia of Vajrayana culture. The graduated Vajrayana path consists of cultural learning as part of an exotic educational system that in its specific elements has little relevance to the West in the 21st century. To apply the Dzogchen view, it is all material to be cognized and let go without attachment or aversion. It is to be understood as no different, no better or

worse, possessing no greater value or meaning, no greater source of joy or satisfaction, than our own head-centered, materialistic, post-christian demotic culture. For the Dzogchen adept, a football match and a Vajrayana ritual have identical value; the lama (the guru, the priest or shaman) is whatever human being fulfills that role and function in the moment. For those with even a little experience of the truth of Garab Dorje's first principle, Tibetan culture, Buddhism and lama worship are shibboleths to be taken down and seen off before acquaintance with the Dzogchen view can be enlarged and fully invested. A momentary change of focus from West to East, from our culturally specific purview to the larger universal perspective that the cultural home of Dzogchen provides, may be necessary while we embrace the precepts of radical Dzogchen. If it also gives us insight into the sham and vanity of the conventions of our own society, we can be grateful to the Tibetans for that.

Clearly, it is an error to take what at first sight appears to be an exposition of the unadulterated gradualist view with a laddered agenda of technical exercises to be the whole story. To do that is to lose the main value of the treatise. The brilliance of Jigme Lingpa in his *Yeshe Lama* surely lies in his presentation of deconstructive relative praxis within the context and with the assumptions of the overarching nondual Dzogchen view; the keys to the doors that lead out of intellectual confinement lie within the intellectual arena. He provides the pith instruction that allows recognition of mind's nature while sustaining the basic assumption that that recognition is already achieved. In that way, absolute and relative remain an indissoluble unity. There is no dichotomy of gradual and sudden method. The cultural or religious form is always the immanent doorway to its own immediate transcendence. To those who are yet unable to grok the Dzogchen view, those blinded by the light, it will appear that Jigme Lingpa has written a manual of instruction to be taken literally. Those persons will revert to the five-hundred-thousands ngondro practice, the Five Nail preliminaries, and to shamata and vipasyana.

A tenet of radical Dzogchen omitted above is that nothing should be hidden for future revelation and nothing should be used as a carrot to encourage dilatory students or 'unready' karmas. Such methods may be useful in the monastery, or in the elementary stage of education, but such duplicity discourages aspirants for whom suffering has provided insufficient impetus. What is 'secret' should imply self-secrecy, not some named or unnamed food in the larder to be brought out for a subsequent meal. Self-secrecy implies that what is hidden remains hidden until it manifests spontaneously or that it can never manifest overtly because its nature prohibits manifestation. The traditional Tibetan stricture against revealing what the curriculum has in store at an advanced level is only valid on the graduated path of Vajrayana, not in Dzogchen.

So, in the bulk of this book describing techniques to be practiced in space-time, we are frequently reminded of the absolute aspect of the practice. We remain aware of the basic assumption of an over-arching, transcendent, purpose—or rather nonpurpose—behind or beyond the motivation implicit in the descriptions of exercises to be learned and practiced in series. In the prologue, for example, we are informed that Longchenpa's vision releases those on both graduated and instantaneous paths simultaneously. How does that occur? Consider the import of the statement already quoted above, that from the moment we accept the embodiment of buddha as refuge—experientially and notionally—all experience arises as fruition, and that fruition is pure presence. That realization is of crucial importance to the gradualists who count themselves out of radical Dzogchen. For that reason we must accept the exercises of the Dzogchen graduated path as indistinguishable from the pathless path itself. The path is certainly the goal, but the starting point, which is the recognition of Garab Dorje's first principle, is the path and the goal. In this way the starting point is the pathless path.

That being so, still, this *Yeshe Lama* will be used in two—at least two—different ways. It will be read first as a reinforcement—as a reminder—of the realization of our authentic natural condition of being, and secondly as a textbook detailing exercises to increase receptivity to a goal only vaguely cognized. The terms 'broad' and 'narrow' may be applied to these respective modes of praxis.

The first requires no formal training in what has not yet been assimilated by karmic volition. 'Broad' praxis is defined simply as recognition of whatever arises—whether walking, sitting, eating or defecating—as the radiance of mind's nature in a nondual frame. Implicit in this praxis is the understanding that any even slight movement in the direction of goal-attainment is counterproductive and constitutes a '*geke*'—an obstructing spirit. And the root of the practice is a strong mystical experience that turns us around in the seat of consciousness, so that there is no longer even a shadow of doubt that detachment from appearances and attachment to them have the same status and serve the same function in the light of the spontaneity of pure presence. It should be noted here, however, that such praxis does not exclude any kind of religious activity whatsoever, but that such activity has the same status as any secular behavior.

While broad praxis has no structure whatsoever, narrow practice is all structure, either elaborate or simple. Narrow practice is required to remove doubt and spiritual ambition, opening the gates to the realization of the nature of mind, although with an understanding that nothing can be done to induce such realization. It consists of a disciplined, renunciate routine of physical, energetical and mental exercises. An outline of such a daily routine and an agenda of yoga practice accompany a Breakthrough/Leapover

(*trekcho-togal*) lamrim. It is important to understand that unless and until an intimation of the nature of mind according to Garab Dorje's first and primary precept has been realized, only the basic training is prescribed.

In brief, what we have here in our hands is an affirmation of the essential nondual nature of all experience and the ineluctable bind of identity with it, together with a number of exercises that make that insight infinitely more accessible for individuals of different capacities and in different psychological states. At first sight, it may appear to prescribe a series of physical, energetic and mental exercises, but as we assimilate Jigme Lingpa's vision as if by osmosis, as we recognize the validity of the Dzogchen view as the natural disposition of bodymind, it becomes evident that the ladder structure of the manual is a fraud. Surely, simply by recalling the nature of mind in any given situation, perhaps prompted by a relevant exercise, takes us to exactly the same place. In other words, if we are ready and waiting, the Breakthrough ritual of pointing out will put us into the same nondual condition of authenticity as sitting with a fixed gaze in the Leapover posture of a recumbent elephant.

A last word on the use of this book: Some people will be best served by wrapping it up in brocade and putting it on a high shelf (where it is still visible), or placing it at the back of an altar, as do many illiterate and not-so-illiterate Tibetans. In that place, as a nonverbal symbol, it can act as a constant reminder of the inexpressible and inconceivable nature of Dzogchen's existential actuality. To steer away from the rocks of intellectual fascination and conceptual constipation, we can envisage the *Yeshe Lama* as an icon that purifies religion and releases us from attachment to emotional and neurotic preoccupation, and from fixation upon ideas and ideology and philosophical and metaphysical dogma. That, surely, is good for all human beings and for the future of the planet.

Structure and Content

Jigme Lingpa structured his text in three parts, according to the reader's acumen—high, medium and low. The section requiring high acumen includes basic training—Breakthrough (*trekcho*) and Leapover (*togal*). Treatment of Leapover comprises by far the largest section of the book. The second part, for those of middling acumen, treats the bardos, the four 'intermediate states'. The third, a very short section, treats transport to buddhafields for those of lesser acumen. These three parts can be viewed as separate and discrete modules, three different universes inhabited by different beings. While maintaining that division of three parts, for easy reference a division of five chapters treating Basic Training, Breakthrough, Leapover, Bardos and Buddhafields respectively has been superimposed. It is unwise from the radical perspective to read too much into any structure. Perhaps the best approach is to see the *Yeshe Lama* as a compendium of descriptions

of paradigmatic events that may give meaning and purpose to life. Taken as a whole, its component twin experiences of heightened awareness of its spaciousness (Breakthrough) and total absorption in its sensory fields (Leapover) comprise a sense of nondual pure presence (*rikpa*).

Life in a monastery, where time is endless and distractions few, a privileged and exalted lifestyle in Tibet, increasingly is considered uncongenial in the West. Since the European Renaissance and Reformation, the secular and spiritual aspects of life have become more integrated—at least in an ideal frame. Although some of us may take time off for retreat, or a thorough rest and recuperation, it is only the innately lazy type, or the true hermit-mystic, that opts out of mainstream society to pursue religious practices to the exclusion of everything else. Dzogchen is not in essence monastic, although in Tibet late in its history it became the prerogative of the large monasteries, which anyway are best perceived as religious communes. Jigme Lingpa wrote this manual when monasticism and the hermitic tradition were strong in Tibet, and it needs, therefore, decoding for western laymen (and of course laywomen), people who are fully integrated into the mainstream of western culture, as well as those who live an alternative lifestyle peripheral to the conventional scene. We include among them the denizens of dharma centers, who although in general are social, political and religious in orientation, may also have a tangential interest in Dzogchen. Notice that the periods of dedicated practice of most of these exercises are short, whereas the view is timeless.

Basic Training

We need to get away from the misconception of the *ngondro* as a beginner's practice. The phrase imbues us with the pernicious notion of the ladder path in time, starting at the bottom and climbing up to the top. Further, each of the elements of the Dzogchen *ngondro* in itself is capable of reminding us of the natural dispensation, wherein nondual recognition and release is an automatic, involuntary function. For those reasons, with the stress on 'basic' as 'grounding', or 'initiatory', experience, the first section herein has been called Basic Training. These exercises, including the technique of the four elements, should be understood not so much as methods of preparation and improvement of a foundation for Breakthrough and Leapover but as paradigms of actual daily experience that illuminate, purify and integrate each moment of perception into a holistic vision.

In the West, in radical Dzogchen, the *khorda rushen* and the *speech clarification* exercises in particular deserve vital and concentrated attention. Tulku Orgyen reminds us that 'Vimalamitra used to practice the *khorda rushen* six months out of every year on Vulture's Peak at Rajgir, and by so doing he was able to manifest the rainbow body.' Experiential separation of *samsara* from *nirvana* by acting out the entire range of our existential potential, and

thus distinguishing it from the bliss-awareness that defines detachment from it, defines its main benefit. But in terms of western psychotherapy, our neuroses are released, suppressed emotion is released, thoughtforms and habit patterns are released in the acting out of samsara, and intimation of the ultimate release is discovered in the *neduwa*. Besides, we can learn to love our own samsara—ourselves—in our own egoic manifestations, together with all its dark corners, by discovering and integrating the principles of the samskaras of everyone else into our own consciousness—because we share the all-ground.

‘Rushen’ means distinguishing or separating samsara from nirvana. In our ordinary, undistinguished, consciousness, they are mixed up, like sex and love, and like war and courage. In their separation, we are making the distinction between the attachment to samsaric experience and detachment from it, between imprisonment in our minds and the freedom of release from our thoughts, between neurosis and transcendence. There is a slight divergence of opinion between lineages upon the procedure that best effects this separation. Some say that the distinction is made most effectively by exhausting body and mind in the process of acting out the six realms and after each session relaxing in total abandonment and thereby experiencing the ‘little death’ of the post-orgasmic state, the *neduwa*; others say that acting out buddha-activity in a session of equal import following immediately after the samsaric session is adequate to induce the detachment of nirvana. Buddha-activity includes copying Sakyamuni’s meditation under the bodhi-tree in Bodhgaya, performing the yogin’s ascetic activity, acting out the mudras of a yidam, and so on, and also mimicking the debate so cherished by the Geluk school. Jigme Lingpa takes the latter approach, turning the *neduwa* into a separate, more leisurely practice and in his exaltation of debate affirms a surprising academic tendency. Rushen is dealt with cursorily by Jigme, the hermit-mystic, but as a way of life suited admirably to extroverted 21st century non-monastic Dzogchen practitioners, it is not only basic training but also a doorway into the Dzogchen from which there is no return.

Jigme Lingpa’s *clarification of mind* is exceptional in that through it, through a rational analysis, we are brought to experiential realization of the trikaya. The manner in which this argument is conventionally presented, often leaves us cold, uninspired, and wishing to move on to the contemplative phase of mind clarification. ‘Where is the mind?’ is the lama’s usual, supposedly provocative, question. Somewhere in a physical organ? Where did it originate? Somewhere outside? In the womb? What is it? A rope, a snake or nothing whatsoever? This kind of cogitation leads us to no specific solution, but under Rikzin Jigme Lingpa’s tutelage the actual searching leads us directly and experientially to the trikaya. So how, in this light, in the middle of his investigation, can he find time to slag off the philosophers: ‘We reach our destination directly, actually seeing the reality of the Natural Great

Perfection, not like those arrogant contemporary philosophers who claim attainment through logical reasoning.'

Breakthrough (Trecho)

The entire realization of Breakthrough, according to the *Yeshe Lama*, depends upon what is known as the 'introduction' or 'pointing out', or, in other words, the recognition of the nature of mind in fulfillment of Mahaguru Garab Dorje's first precept. It is also 'initiatory experience'. Certainly, the stricture that 'the synchronicity in which the nature of mind shines through cannot be contrived' applies here, and that upsets the rationale of the graduated approach. In his exposition, Jigme Lingpa assumes that intimation of the nature of mind is ineluctably attained through the pointing out, for such is the power and efficacy of ritual performance and such is the faith of the Tibetan people's belief in it. In this context he does not even mention the basic training as a prerequisite. But for us, receptivity can be optimized, and that increase in receptivity and an almost inevitable slight intimation of the nature of mind, is recognized by ritual introduction. Some lamas and texts steeped in the Vajrayana insist upon the four ritual empowerments as a basis for Breakthrough, and insofar as empowerment requires no deliberate action, no striving towards goal-attainment, it demands a receptivity similar to the simply sitting that is the praxis of Breakthrough. In his sanction of ritual in the *Yeshe Lama* and in the *Longchen Nyingtik* in general, Jigme Lingpa conforms to the ethos of his times: ritual defines Dzogchen in the time of decline and at present.

Again, however, in radical Dzogchen synchronicitous empowerment and maturation—existential realization in the flow of daily life—is to be given primacy, although evidently when the guru-lama sets us up for the existential realization, giving us permission, as it were, telling us that buddha is how we really are, if only we would drop our silly ideas of how that is, we are given the confidence that is the catalyst or lubricant of the setup even if the much-to-be-desired epiphany does not occur. Jigme Lingpa reserves what is called the empowerment of the creative potentiation of pure presence for Leapover; other lamas would insist upon the Word Empowerment ('The Fourth'), as an entry into Breakthrough territory.

Jigme does not mention any method of introduction other than the ritual procedure. On the graduated path, there is no alternative to either its formal or informal modes. Addressing the guru-lama officiator, he provides two forms of introduction, the first a provisional view, in which all our experience is introduced as a projection of mind's nature. He dismisses this as a dangerous partial truth, which should be given only to those who have faith but no experiential base, and then continues quickly to elaborate the essential Nyingtik view and its meditation corollary in the ritual context of the Guru speaking ex-cathedra to his students. That litany is brief and in its

succinct axiomatic style manages to impart what lesser teachers would take hours to express. In fact, Jigme's entire Breakthrough section is not more than a few pages in length. After the initiatory section he spends a few paragraphs on what he calls resolving doubt and eliminating issues, which have been subtitled 'Simultaneous Arising and Release', 'Freely Resting' and 'Variant Capacity'.

To reiterate an essential point, it is vital to get the view precisely correct. When the view is correct, it becomes the vision in which nonmeditation flourishes. When the view is correct, it dissolves by itself in spontaneous combustion / deconstruction. When the view is correct, the bliss-emptiness quotient suffuses the intellect and dethrones it, forcing its abdication. When the view is correct, conduct is always appropriate, always right and righteous. Only in ritual can the view be calculated rationally and logically and reduced to a dogmatic formula. In actuality, an inexpressible experience of recognition of the nature of mind must be at the root of it.

So Breakthrough is about breaking through the physical habits, energetic patterns and mental karma that bring satisfaction, comfort, pleasure, joy, ecstasy and all the signs of happiness, or bring the self-destructive, masochistic, painful, sorrowful, despondent, neurotic conditioning that provide signs of sadness. We Breakthrough through into the ground of being out of which everything emanates. The meditation provides the view and the view induces the meditation. The meditation is therefore a Breakthrough experience and the view is an epiphany. If the view fails to induce nonmeditation it is probably merely a product of the intellect, an exercise in futility, a practice grown old, tired and redundant.

Breakthrough, at least, should provide release from the tyranny of the intellect through an identity with the overarching reality of being. Insofar as neurosis is contained in, and created by, conceptual mind, if we leave behind the thoughts by which we know it, looking at their thoughtless context, we are involuntarily thrust into the here and now. In this way, Breakthrough contains the answer to all mental disturbance and derangement. After we have realized the nature of mind in whatever appears as thought, the truth of the famous adage of Vajrayana that it is better to slip on sandals rather than cover the earth with leather renders all psychiatric medication and psychotherapy redundant.

Jigme Lingpa treads very lightly in this Breakthrough section. The implication is that the mere indirect suggestion of nonaction and its efficacy is sufficient to induce the natural state of being where everything is sameness, which is to say, where everything, every experience, while retaining its own unique integrity, has the one blissful taste of awareness of the now. He avoids the up-front direct statements of Breakthrough such as 'Nothing exists but mind's nature'; 'Whatever we do is self-liberated'; 'Stirring from the natural

dispensation of being is impossible'; 'We are already buddha'; and 'There is no difference between buddha and sentient beings'. Such statements, taken at face value as veridical dogma, are nothing but nonsensical raving, or the rationalizations or philosophizing of an alienated intellect dissociated from its inherent nature. Conversely, if the anti-intellectual urban-yogin assumes the verity of those assertions, is he not setting himself up for the synchronicitous moment of recognition that confirms and validates them?

A sense of ignominy may thwart recognition of the ground of being. So long as we assert and identify with 'little me' in the face of 'big buddha', recognition is impeded. Recognition is precluded by the alienation implied by such an absence of self-esteem. So long as we see ourselves as tiny islands surrounded by a threatening shark-filled ocean, we are trapped. So long as we hanker for the security that alleviates the loneliness and fearfulness, recognition is obstructed. Fear may be the mind-poison, creating the illusion of an impenetrable nebulous blanket over buddha; but that same poison can take us into the bardo where release for the Dzogchen yogin is guaranteed.

Breakthrough is the sole requirement—or crux—of entry into Leapover. Without the unitary bliss and emptiness that is the fruit of nonaction, Leapover is a nonstarter. It may be possible for a garuda chick to jump out of its egg and into the vast space of the sky and glide all its life away, but only after a long period of maturation in the egg. Breakthrough is accomplished through nonaction, and only then is it possible for the demanding yogic lifestyle of Leapover to mature. If anyone believes there is a short cut to the rainbow body, they are deluded—there is only instantaneous recognition.

Leapover (Togal)

With conviction in the understanding of Breakthrough, Leapover integrates that realization into everyday life through recognition of ultimate reality in every sensory perception. So long as we entertain the intuition intellectually without concomitant existential experience, insofar as we believe the ordinary light of day to be enlightenment, and the delusory subject/object dichotomy of everyday perception to be the nonduality in the matrix of the here and now, we are still in the elementary Breakthrough phase of gaining acquaintance with our natural disposition. In the unnatural separation of Breakthrough from Leapover as discrete disciplines on a graduated path, however, there is an assumption that Breakthrough can easily remain an intellectually synthesized system of concepts, that it is a lower or inferior yoga—Jigme himself sometimes makes that insinuation. This prejudice is inherent in a primary conceptional distinction between Breakthrough and Leapover: in Breakthrough the appearance of seemingly external phenomena such as rocks and mountains remain as rocks and mountains, while in

Leapover the rocks and mountains break down into pure lightform, so that having 'gained mastery of appearances' the visual field is a mass of rainbow light. In the same way, in Breakthrough, while the body is reduced experientially to its particulate composition, in Leapover that residue of energy is released into, and as, clear light. For that reason it is said that while Breakthrough produces a body of light, Leapover results in a rainbow body without residue.

It is unfortunate that in such an analysis Breakthrough and Leapover are painted as discrete disciplines: they are not. As Jigme says, in order that a pith instruction should stick in the mind it cannot be too often repeated: 'No Leapover without Breakthrough; no Breakthrough without Leapover.' Experience and emptiness are inseparable: shall we pull them apart in order to alter the shape of the former or to purify the nature of the latter? Spaciousness and pure presence are the same thing: to admit separation is to revert to the determinate activity of Vajrayana. Visionary experience begins in Breakthrough nonmeditation and Leapover provides the crucial points that allow familiarity with the nature of mind.

The tendency in Tibet to formulate dogmatic precepts may have had its root in the lamas' mnemonic method, which requires succinct rules, but the Tibetan—as indeed the Asian and the old European—identity of 'knowledge' with recall of memorized 'data' in itself necessarily is a cause of decline of Dzogchen and any discipline that is pre-eminently experiential. The distinction made between—and separation of—Breakthrough and Leapover is one case in point. Another is the categorization of visionary experience, which comprises all of Leapover meditation, into four 'visions'. The tradition has encased the visionary aspect of Dzogchen realization into four boxes: vision of direct experience of reality, increasing visionary experience, vision of the full scope of pure presence and consummate vision. A lot of garish presumption is involved and a risk of opening Pandora's box is allowed, but Jigme's summation of Leapover does need to be unpacked. Thereby, it can become a set of precepts to instruct, or a map to guide, rather than a puzzle to solve. Two initial points stand out.

First, in practice, not only does each of the four visions comprise a range of visionary experience, but also the various categories bleed into each other. The conventional presentation is informed by the notion of an ideal progression in the stages of visionary experience. A first hit of nonduality implicit in the recognition of the nature of mind leads into a temporal period when an initial burst of confidence accompanying the direct experience of the nature of mind allows a wide range of previously inhibited or suppressed karmically determined tendencies to manifest. Some such impulses, referred to as 'projected' pure presence, are perceived as pixelation of different kinds in 'increasing visionary experience'. When our confidence in the practice is optimal, when there is nothing left to stretch our ability in

potentiation of creativity, our visionary experience has come to include the full scope of pure presence. Here, our putative nondual world has become a world that is best described in the traditional Vajrayana way, a world full of buddhas in union with their consorts, peaceful and wrathful, each with their retinue of bodhisattvas, dakas and dakinis, protectors and protectresses and the entire pantheon of being that is graphically depicted in tankas of mandalas and buddha-deities. Although this is a nondual world, there is still a slight distinction between the awareness and the lightform, still a slight sense of individuated being, although that being is known in itself as a selfless and a totally insubstantial illusion inseparable from an environment that likewise has no true existence. However, finally, that sense of distinction is lost and all differences have vanished. Our function in this latter condition is described in the section on control of rebirth and resurrection (*Yeshe Lama* pp. 78-80).

Secondly, while in basic training and Breakthrough the imagery is straightforward and the instruction is to be taken at face value, in Leapover and in the Bardos the imagery is poetic and evocative and the instruction is sometimes unclear in its ambiguity. Multivalent and/or ambiguous language is actually typical of Leapover precepts. Describing the first two categories of vision, for example, the texts employ metaphors indicating nondual experience that simultaneously and graphically describe visionary forms that are the doorways into their own transcendence. The crucial word 'pixel' (*tiklé*) denominates one such image—the all-pervasive sphere of spaciousness-presence—but it can also denote various emanations in the visual field, all of them graphically describable entities. The least of them, for example, is the 'floater' in the visionary field. Then in a pixelated Leapover vision, the *tiklé*-pixels constitute a field of rainbow light. As visionary experience expands, *tiklé*-pixels appear the size of dinner plates and dustbin lids in the visual field. But the crucial ambiguous pixel is a circle of blue rimmed by concentric bands of rainbow colors, which represents the sole all-inclusive reality of spaciousness-presence.

The 'vajra-chain' is another crucial term with an equally multivalent meaning. If we take it at face value, we teeter on the edge of the precipice of reification—and then probably fall into it. We must, therefore, hang in its ambiguity and allow it to perform its magic. If we start a process of analysis, it is an easy slope to the prison of concrete definition in the rational mind with a danger of madness creeping in on the way. The vajra-chain is a Dzogchen koan.

A third crucial example of ambiguity is what herein has been rendered 'sublime being'. The Sanskrit says 'kaya' and the Tibetan 'ku', and the conventional English translation is 'body' or 'buddha-body'. Whatever it is called, it is represented as an anthropomorphic buddha-form, which works well in the devotional suppositional approaches, but needs to be unpacked in

Dzogchen Leapover because we seek experientially what that anthropomorphic representation implies. Surely, it is only Geluk geshe who actually see graphic mandala images packed with varieties of buddha forms in the sky during states of meditation. Dzogchen adepts experience the nondual reality that the mandalas represent. If you doubt this, consider Jigme's holistic vision as sublime being, where 'appearances are not differentiated' (*Yeshe Lama* p. 117). Then, what is the difference between the simple pixel representations with concentric rims of color and the fully developed buddha-mandala pixels? The distinction must lie in the effect that the presence of the lamp of self-sprung wisdom has on the awareness of the now—all the potential of awareness is illuminated thereby (*Yeshe Lama* p. 54).

The straight similes and metaphors that describe the visionary forms are quite distinct from the multivalent terms mentioned above—the shields and the latticework and the lotuses in plan view and so on. The similes of running deer and hovering bees, likewise, evoke similar but separate experiences in another dimension. Here is a dream world of pleasant hallucination, quite familiar to those who know the shamanic world of psychedelic plant medicine—although the labels and descriptive metaphors applied to the visionary forms may not coincide. A final category of metaphor is encountered in the third visionary section, when part buddha-forms are mentioned increasing in size from an ushnisha to a full buddha image. These metaphors may represent a process of increasing radiance in depth and increasing assimilation of multifarious human experience in breadth.

We have indeed entered a bardo here, and it is not at all coincidental that Leapover visions and the visions of the bardo of reality are the same or similar. This bardo is a twilight zone between the dualistic perceptions of samsara and the nondual reality of the great nirvana. We move in and out of the nondual trikaya experience. 'Now you see it; now you don't.' In addition, it is the *language* that takes us on the roller-coaster of knowing and unknowing.

Some people will say that the Leapover and bardo visions are variant takes on the same experience. This is suggested by the similarity of terminology and visionary form. The trikaya, for example, is used as a descriptive counter in both situations, and the image of the Youthful Vase-Body, for instance, with its six special qualities (see Appendix 4 of *Everything Is Light*) describing the timeless moment of release is also found in both. But an identical milieu can be deduced from its treatment by the commentators, who, for example, sometimes place the eightfold holistic vision and its dissolution in Leapover and sometimes in instruction on the bardo of reality.

Once the Leapover language is mastered, the instruction is easily understood. It is given in terms of 'cruxes'—crucial, or key, points—each crux

comprising an entry, a doorway, into Leapover, each crux allowing a leap-over. The primary cruxes are those of the three doors ('the three imperatives') and the three gazes, the field of focus, and breathing and pure presence; and also the four lamps and the four visions. Follow the indications of the cruxes and the crucial points and Leapover is accomplished. In our dreams, in our childhood, in our visions, in our recollection of the bardos, or through excess, through heightened sensory experience, through altered states of mind, through psychotropic experience, we may have gained glimpses of the visions described under the headings of the four types of visionary experience. But to irreversibly attain the vision of consummation of all experience is reserved for the rare few whose preparation in past lives allows them to attain realization of the nature of mind at the moment it is pointed out and then immediately to reach the place of no-mind, intellect spent, reality consummate, never to return.

A word about the rainbow body: Despite Tibetan exoteric lore and folk belief, it is perhaps more useful to believe that it is not so much the institutionalized tulkus or holders of conventional lineages who achieve rainbow body, not the khenpos and school teachers, not the great meditators and bodhisattvas, but yogins and yoginis who, lost in anonymity, can never be named. Far be it from me to question the lore carried by myth, legend and gossip that relates stories of rainbow body, but after a lifetime of immersion in Indian and Tibetan religious culture, it is my perception that the subtlety, sophistication and efficacy of its priestcraft far outstrips our current European and American models. It is foolish to deny the apocryphal stories of attainment of rainbow body—just as it is foolish to deny the myth of the resurrected Christ—because the heart of the revelation of existential truth is beyond the intellect. But in this period of transition from East to West, we must do whatever is necessary to bring the transmission home to individuals of every level of acumen and particularly to the existential level that transcends both philosophy and apocryphal legend.

Finally, as a codicil to the entire discussion of Breakthrough/ Leapover, the Vajrayana-embedded Dzogchen precepts insist that there is no way to attain culmination of the four visions without dependence upon a guru-lama. Indisputably it is true that the nature of mind is the ultimate guru (the 'true guru') and that the natural attraction that we have for it provides the starting point, the path and the goal. But here two reasons are suggested why the realization of Dzogchen is immeasurably easier through dependence upon a guru-lama.

First, the guru-lama is the teacher who in Breakthrough transmits the precepts and points out the nature of mind and in Leapover gives the crucial instruction. The recipients in both these events (as in the bestowal of empowerment) need to find respect and devotion as the basis of that transmission. The transmission is not entirely an intellectual event, and

contrary to the traditional wisdom, scholarship, knowledge and learning are not essential, and, anyway, in the West, we tend to ignore the cultural requisites that were expected of monastic, hierarchical or academic teachers in Tibet. My own teachers demonstrated the qualities that provided the medium for transmission—selflessness, kindness and openness—and that was more than enough. But there is another less palpable quality, best indicated as a thread that runs through the long lineal succession of teachers from the first nirmanakaya buddha down to our own teacher. That thread has no particular shape or form or attribute; its nature is inconceivable and inexpressible; and its nature is the actual transmission itself and also the means of transmission. We are foolish to deny this ‘lineage’ and deprived if we lack it.

Then, secondly, as fallible human beings (and this does not apply to infallible nonhumans), along the way we run into impenetrable miasmas of maya, the delusions projected by Mara’s daughters and the convoluted nightmares spun by the four devils. The guru-lama is our fall-back refuge in such situations, not as a teacher through rational discourse, and by neither formal nor intimate instruction, not even as an exemplar, but simply as a sounding board, a point of nonreference. It is pointless to argue that the guru-lama is himself a human being with human foibles and feet of clay for we are concerned only with looking at our face in the clear mirror of his mind—the mind that by nature can never be sullied or contaminated or even marked. That allowance is the sum of his kindness, an inestimable and boundless grace. Jigme mentions it only once in the First Part (although frequently in the Third Part) but that is enough. If the guru-lama is needed in Breakthrough and Leapover, in the bardos a guide is indispensable.

Bardo

The bardo is a big allegory, of course, a metaphor for a state of introspection that we may fall into through psychotic breakdown or severe depression, grand mal seizure, ‘dark night of the soul’, through a self-induced entheogenic trance, psychedelic experience, states of deep meditative absorption or similar conditions. The descriptions adduced in the *Yeshe Lama* by a mystic of undoubted authenticity, a mystic with a strong scholarly bent, are of invaluable interest to all travelers into inner space, voluntary or involuntary, concerned with identifying and verbalizing their experience or reproducing it. Dzogchen is of questionable value to those who believe that the bardo describes experience after the actual death of the body at the end of life, although truly they may gain some solace from the notion of a final dissolution into the clear light. There is ample evidence that the treatment of bardo experience herein is derived originally from the tradition of Central Asian Shamanism, in which deep trance states were induced through music and plant medicines to manipulate the spirit world as the goal. We can assume that the experiential knowledge of those

shamans formed the ground of the profound metapsychology of the bardos that the Tibetan Buddhists inherited, developed and transformed, integrating it into their Vajrayana. Special emphasis was placed on the methods of release from the karmic visions of samsara that it represented into the nirvana of buddha. This Vajrayana dharma was propagated mainly through *termas*, the revealed literature, but also through the tantras of the *Nyingma Gyuebum*, and those twin sources form the basis of Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa's Dzogchen exegesis. As in the entire text of the *Yeshe Lama*, the graduated view and the immediate view are totally integrated.

In the radical Dzogchen context, one of the values of Jigme Lingpa's treatment of the bardo lies in his assertion that the synchronicitous moment of recognition of mind's nature and release is always available in all four 'intermediate states'. It is, therefore, intrinsic to all human experience whatsoever. We all have already had bardo experience and therefore we are familiar with that recognition and release, so Jigme will be describing and explaining the nature of that experience in terms of the mandala of Dzogchen. It will be like looking at a map of an area wherein we have been travelling recently. For those who cannot allow and admit their own recognition and believe that access to the bardos has been denied them, the bardo precepts will prepare their minds for experience yet to come. It will increase receptivity, reduce fear and apprehension, and modify expectation. In short, it will set them up for bardo experience in life and prepare them for death. As an adjunct to this manual of preparation for death, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Todrol)* is indispensable as a liturgical description of what the bardo will look like. But the *Yeshe Lama* manual consists of pith instruction, precepts that tell us precisely what to do and how to do it, and it sets us up to obey the instructions of the liturgy.

Under the four heads of natural bardo, bardo of dying, bardo of reality and bardo of becoming, Jigme describes various psychotic conditions and their remedies, remedies that boil down to recognition of psychosis and neurosis as means of realization of a supra-human condition, namely, buddha. To be brief, the natural bardo deals with neurosis rather than psychosis, the neurosis that attends embodiment, and Jigme deals with it very gently, recommending a monastic education, learning and contemplation. In the bardo of dying he recommends pragmatically, and describes in a wonderfully compassionate manner in detail, yogas to relieve the pain and anxiety of dying. At the same time, we can bear in mind the sensation of dying as our senses are stripped and then lost as we descend into the inner world of vision and consummation of experience. The *petit mort* of orgasm may be obliquely addressed at that time. Then in the bardo of reality, which is treated at far greater length than the other bardos, Jigme walks us through the various experiences—and manners of expression of experience—of holistic vision with which mystics in every culture are familiar, Shamanic, Sufi, Buddhist,

Hindu and Christian, regardless of religious culture. The bardo of becoming describes experience of re-entry into embodiment, but the lyrical evocative description of the disembodied spirit allows us to project ourselves into that putative after-death state.

Without abandoning the fiction that the bardos of reality and of becoming describe events after death (the after-death state), it can be expedient to assume that those bardos bear upon extraordinary experience between birth and death. That experience is certain to be derived from many different and probably secret sources, otherwise why use ambiguity or the allegorical method? So first it behooves us to look rationally at the origin of the bardo tradition and the conditions that allowed it to thrive on the Tibetan plateau. To begin, we should recall that the pre-buddhist shamanic culture had close associations with the Central Asian shamanism that employed entheogenic plants, along with ritual drumming, to enter the visionary realms of the gods. Then, perhaps it is relevant that DMT, the active chemical in the powerful psychedelic medicine ayahuasca used by indigenous South American shamans as a medicine of body and soul, is exuded, probably by the pineal gland, in darkness or semidarkness and at the time of death. Also, it is relevant that at high altitude where oxygen is in short supply and where hermitages and 'guru rinpoche' caves are usually located, the red to white blood corpuscle ratio is radically altered, and that the absence of iron and other essential minerals in the diet, creates physiological conditions conducive to psychotic episodes. Finally—and this is a long shot—it is possible that since Tibetan standards of grain storage were similar to those of medieval Europe, where by winter's end ergot mold grew on moist wheat and induced mass millenarian hallucination across large populations, an entheogenic fungus could grow on the barley grain that was the staple food on the Tibetan plateau. With those factors in mind, all of which could facilitate unusual catalytic conditions acting upon the anchorite, together with the powerful internal meditative techniques of Vajrayana and Dzogchen, visionary experience may be divided into three types: dynamic or wrathful visions, peaceful or transcendent visions and nondual visionary experience.

The division of all experience into dynamic and quiescent states is familiar to all those who fall naturally into contemplation. Whatever visionary experience arises in the mind may be classed as one or the other. The wrathful is felt as anxiety, excessively as fear and paranoia, and the peaceful is felt as serene and pleasant, optimally as ecstatic. Whenever these experiences arise, the famous words of Dzogchen instruction repeated by the lama to the dying person are to be recalled, 'Fortunate Heart-Son, recognize all experience as the envisionment of your own mind.' Or, rather than rely upon a discursive command, the response that such instruction invokes should engage automatically. Simultaneous with recognition of an identity of objective and subjective aspects of perception, nondual experience arises.

Nondual experience is holistic vision in which no particular attribute can be specified. It is called the 'clear light'. It is also designated by Jigme as the 'vision of fourfold awareness of the now' (*Yeshe Lama* p. 114). The 'three instants' express the process of moving out of the wrathful and peaceful modes into the nondual state: in the first we have insight into the nature of appearances as insubstantial illusion; through that recognition automatic release from the attachment (or negative attachment) is achieved; and finally in dissolution we enter the nondual state (*Yeshe Lama* p. 120).

The section on the bardo of reality is structured under five headings 'consciousness dissolves into space'; 'space dissolves into clear light'; 'the clear light becomes an indivisible pair'; 'the indivisible pair dissolves into awareness'; and 'awareness dissolves into spontaneity'. In each case Jigme provides a paradigm describing how release is achieved. Although there is prima facie evidence of a causal thread from section to section, it is as if a timeless moment of synchronicous experience had been pulled apart for the purpose of analysis and verbalization, in the same way that the eightfold holistic experience is analyzed in the section on 'awareness dissolves into spontaneity' (*Yeshe Lama* p. 116). As we all know, experience of 'spontaneity' has no extension in time or space; spontaneous efflorescence is a timeless moment of unfoldment. The vision of fourfold awareness and the eightfold holistic vision seem to be different verbal formulations of the same ineffable reality, probably derived originally from different sources and different yogin-adepts.

It is evident that the language that describes the bardo visions is the same as that employed in the four Leapover visions. It is as if experience derived from the bardo was the basis of Leapover instruction, precepts that had their origin in experience in the bardo. 'Space dissolves into clear light' is the equivalent of increasing visionary experience and 'the clear light dissolves into an indivisible pair' is another description of the full scope of pure presence in terms of sublime being anthropomorphized as wrathful and peaceful deities, solitary and in yabyum. 'The indivisible pair dissolves into awareness' is an extra stage introduced to contain an abstract symbolic vision of pure presence. Then 'awareness dissolves into spontaneity' treats the final dissolution into ineffable nonduality. But, to reiterate what is crucial here, 'spaciousness (space)', 'clear light', 'indivisible pair', 'awareness of the now' and 'spontaneity' are all synonyms in the self-referential language of the Great Perfection.

The phenomenology of the bardo of becoming is clearly understood as experience of a being who has become divorced from his body and seeks a way back in. The allegory of a disembodied spirit in an anteroom waiting for rebirth into a womb is an easy extension to which everyone who has come down from a psychedelic experience will relate. For those who are constrained there, it is a place of distress and the spirits who abide there

are generally considered unhappy and restless, or as 'hungry ghosts'. It is a place of discontent, a purgatory, which has been avoided only by those who gained release in the previous moment. It is a prison that can be likened to a state of chemical confinement in the wake of addiction, or inability to feed any merciless habit. In this state, thought hardens into concrete forms; whatever we think is immediately felt corporeally. We have no control here, except, perhaps, in following a preferred karmic tendency. Thus, if we can think the thought of mind's essential nature and follow it, we can reinvest our body in a lotus birth in the buddhafiels that are described in the final part of the book.

Buddhafiels

The Third Part of Jigme Lingpa's manual is composed for those of lesser acumen or small capacity—although most of us would undoubtedly feel blessed if transport to the nirmana buddhafiels were to be our lot in death. From Jigme's description of such individuals, we can deduce the meaning of 'acumen' and 'capacity'. Such people enjoy listening to Dzogchen and provide lip service to it, but they do not engage in any narrow practice. They perceive themselves belonging to the lineage and have at least a conventional regard for a guru-lama, but they engage in no ritual or formal contemplative activity. This describes a large number of secular Tibetan Buddhists and many western devotees. Notice that no specific moral qualification is mentioned. For them, simple recall of the nature of mind, or a recollection of what they have considered the most favorable place of rebirth, will give transport to the nirmana fiels. The nirmana fiels are evidently nirmanakaya buddhafiels, and the method of birth into them is the miraculous lotus birth, and the nirmanakaya form that is reborn is a tulku of Guru Rinpoche. Here the wrathful and peaceful deities are actually perceived within their mandalas, in the moment, on the path. For those of lesser acumen, one more birth is to be undergone, but that one will be a lotus birth.

Jigme Lingpa and the Longchen Nyintik

Jigme Lingpa Khyentse Wozer was born in the year 1730 in Central Tibet, in the upper Yarlung Valley, in one of the more fertile and rich of the tributary Tsangpo valleys and the center of Tibet's original political and religious culture. He was born into a family of Nyingma village lamas: that was his heritage and that was his destiny. He was a natural mystic and he was to spurn monasteries and monasticism, preferring the hermitage, caves and nature. He spent his childhood in the conventional way, in the local Pelri gumpa, located in the Chongye Valley, where the great kings had been buried, but he did not shine until his adolescence, when his intelligence and his nascent mystic bent became evident. From the age of twenty to thirty, he was in retreat, first in the Pelri Gumpa and then in the caves

of Samye Chimphu. He was a natural scholar, an autodidact, to whom learning easily accumulated, and he received the various empowerments and authorizations expected of him. But the main thing was his visionary experience, which brought him the awareness, wisdom and confidence that conferred upon him the title 'rikzin'. After ten years of formal retreat, he settled down in a hermitage in Tsering Jong, a high tributary of the Chongye valley, and spent the rest of his life there. He was to write down the *Longchen Nyingtik* and other cycles of teachings slowly over his lifetime. He began to teach when he was about forty years old and thereafter an increasing number of devotees, students and pilgrims came to his door, until the *Longchen Nyingtik* and Jigme Lingpa were household names throughout Tibet. Notable among his disciples was Kong Nyon Pawo Wangchuk, The Divine Madman of Kongpo, who exhorted him to write down the *Yeshe Lama*; the student who was to become the first Doderupchen; and, also, the King and Queen of Derge from Kham. Jigme Lingpa died in 1798 at Tsering Jong and was mummified, his body placed in a stupa. His three immediate successive tulku reincarnations were the greatest of the Khampa Dzogchen hierarchs: Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, Patrul Rinpoche and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.

The *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle of texts, of which the *Yeshe Lama* is a key, is of seminal import in the latter-day practice of Dzogchen. Its importance to the practice of the contemporary Nyingma school cannot be overestimated. Terma traditions with relatively short lineages abound, but the *Longchen Nyingtik* is the final authority. The *Dudjom Tersar* may have a stronger hold presently in the West, but Jigme Lingpa is the authoritative point of reference. The root texts of the *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle consist of five mind-terma, revelations discovered by King Trisong Detsen, Yeshe Tsogyel and Bairotsana and then hidden in the Mind (*dgongs*) to be recovered in vision by Jigme, an incarnation of Trisong Detsen. Also included in the root text collection are two pure vision texts, texts that lacked the same certification as the terma revelations but had equal authority and value. *The Aspiration of Ground, Path and Fruit* (see Appendix 5 of *Yeshe Lama*) is one of the most renowned prayers in the Nyingma tradition. Two texts of Jigme's own composition, including the *Yeshe Lama* and a companion commentary, complete the core atiyoga cycle of the much larger *Longchen Nyingtik* canon.

It is disputable whether Jigme Lingpa's literary revelations or his exemplary life and lifestyle are his most valuable legacy. The extended *Longchen Nyingtik* itself is of inestimable value to the practitioners of both broad and narrow modes of practice. The *Yeshe Lama* deals primarily with Dzogchen atiyoga, but other texts such as the *Yangsang Lama* cycle of mahayoga practice, for example, is an amazing work of Vajrayana. Undoubtedly, the *Longchen Nyingtik*, relative to Longchenpa's finest Dzogchen vision is mired in ritual, but it carries the seeds of Maha Ati and sometimes allows it complete

precedence. It has been the mainstay of institutional Dzogchen during the last three hundred years. Jigme's life, on the other hand, from all accounts, certified the value of the anonymous lifestyle of the Dzogchen hermit, a narrative of humility, self-effacement, compassion and responsiveness, illuminated by holistic vision and nondual awareness. His failure to achieve a rainbow body at his demise somehow punctuates his life with ultimate success.

Jigme's terma revelations, pure vision treatises and personal compositions were all the product of visionary experience in the prime of his life. These visions, in two sets, were the basis of his Dzogchen and his exposition of Dzogchen. During his first retreat in Pelri Gompa, lasting seven years, during his first visionary period, he dreamed that he went to the Great Stupa of Boudhanath in the Kathmandu Valley and received from a dakini a casket that contained the terma scrolls of his mind-treasures. Another dakini, in the guise of his mother, encouraged him to eat the scrolls, and thereby their meanings were implanted in his mind. His epiphanies resulted in a period of intense writing in which the basis of the *Longchen Nyingtik* cycle were recorded. The second period of visionary experience occurred in Chimphu. Chimphu is the name of high valley above Samye Chokhor, its *phu* consisting of a maze of massive boulders that have created caves and overhangs made into hermitages by yogins since time immemorial, and particularly by Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples, including King Trisong Detsen, Yeshe Tsogyel, the Great Guru's consort, and also Bairotsana, the translator, and Nyang Tingngedzin. Later, in the 14th century, the omniscient Longchenpa himself lived in this cave village. Following them, Jigme had three visions there of Longchenpa of increasing significance and intensity. The first he considered a confirmation of his lifestyle, his purpose and path. In the second, he came to the realization of his virtual identity with the great mystic and poet of whom he was to be considered an incarnation. In the third, he realized the nature of mind as the clear light.

Jigme Lingpa as Polemicist

In three digressions in the *Yeshe Lama*, Jigme Lingpa scolds the followers of Longchenpa for their ignorance and corruption. He mentions, for example, the tendency to follow unthinkingly the propositions and interpretations of the tradition without noticing the anomalies and illogicality that have crept in. He criticizes the custom of guru-lamas to provide facile pointing out instruction, identifying appearances as mind and so on, rather than the Nyngtik view of the nature of being as ineffable and indefinable. He castigates teachers who talk about Leapover but meanwhile are ignorant of the symbolic significance of the visions they experience and describe. These faults surely are endemic to every age and characterize a corner of the human realm on the wheel of life. The habit of teaching Dzogchen out of naïve intellectual understanding, for example, is demonstrated these days by

the tulkus and khenpos who have been half educated in the exiled monastic academies and have had no time or opportunity for existential experience in or out of a renunciate lifestyle, pretending experiential knowledge while mocking others for their arrogation of achievement. But such inadequacy is demonstrated also by the brigade of contemporary western teachers and therapists who have a clear concept of nonduality and teach it, but who have had no existential experience of it. The trick of turning Dzogchen into either a commercial product or the dynamic of a social scene is at least part of what Chogyam Trungpa meant by spiritual materialism, and Tibet—if not its cradle—was at least one of the crucibles of arrant practice of it. In his protestations against inauthenticity and inexact scholarship, Jigme presents himself as a reformer and purifier of the tradition—if he were alive in the West today he would, undoubtedly, be an urban yogi!

Geluk scholars, however, are Jigme's primary focus of censure and here he allows some vitriol to enter his metaphysical diatribe. Although he names no names, it is evident at least in one notable tirade that it is the Gelukpas who are his target because the word 'geshe' is employed—in the mid-18th century, only Geluk teachers were called geshe. Perhaps he himself had been subjected to personal denunciation by geshe maintaining the delusory nature of Leapover experience. Adducing recognition of experience similar to Leapover vision as evidence in the *Kalachakra Tantra* of buddhahood, he denounces the moral duplicity of the geshe who denigrate Dzogchen, their hypocrisy and their SAMAYA-breaking condemnation, before demolishing their metaphysical propositions. Throughout the *Yeshe Lama*, in general, Jigme denounces the scholastic method and the limitations of intellectual bias, of which the followers of Tsongkhapa have always stood accused. Although Dzogchen can produce a seamless, logical presentation and an invulnerable defense using the Geluk terms of reference, from the very beginning, with Garab Dorje, it has stated emphatically that its basis lies in existential experience—direct experience—mystical experience—of the nature of mind. The analytic method, together with metaphysical and linguistic argumentation, has only a small, preliminary place—and even that is questionable—while the comparative method is totally redundant.

At first, it may appear inappropriate and even disgraceful that the great Rikzin Jigme Lingpa ('rikzin' means bearer or holder of *nikpa*, pure presence) should abuse Geluk geshe in chung-house language—'packs of wolves and wild cats', and 'barbarians and wild animals', he calls them. Surely Dzogchen provides a height and depth of confidence that precludes disputation and argument. Jigme says himself, 'Tuned into the Great Perfection, argument and dispute are transcended,' and 'All dispute is redundant in its nonconceptual, unimaginable, space of reality.' It is pertinent that he made the interesting and irrefutable point that the sublime forms of Leapover vision are commensurate with the empty appearances that arise through

Kalachakra meditation. But why cross swords with an ambitious opposition that approaches with a variant set of assumptions and employing a divergent agenda? Surely, either we know the truth of Dzogchen experientially or we do not. If we have had experience of it there can never be any argument or even discussion about the nature of reality, or of buddha—it is ineffable, inconceivable and inexpressible. If on the other hand we have not been blessed by that experience, although there may be an inclination to argue about it, if we understand that any view of that final accomplishment is a partial, intellectual, interpretation, nothing can be said that has any validity. So why does he segue into polemic from time to time amazing us with his passion?

It is conceivable that he includes antithetical propositions and extreme sentimental stances simply to emphasize his own authentic position. Or did a later woodblock carver make invidious additions to the blocks? But perhaps we should see Jigme in a more human light, as an officious schoolmaster intolerant of his beloved students' incompetency, or as a big bear of a man responding with unashamed emotion, or like a father railing at the persecution of his children, indignant at the contempt that the politically victorious party shows to the defeated. Political, social and academic conditions in Tibet in the 18th century, points at this last possibility.

Jigme Lingpa unquestionably believes the tradition of Dzogchen in the 18th century to be in decline. He states it unequivocally: 'These days, during the decline of the Dzogchen tradition...' He has no apparent reason to lie about it and we must take him at his word, at least regarding Central Tibet. Terchen Gyurme Dorje, the great politician tertön of Mindroling gompa belonged to the previous generation and to some extent he shored up the Nyingma tradition against the great wave of Geluk power that had been established by a Mongol army invited into Tibet by anti-Nyingma power-mongering theocratic Geluk politicians. But resisting a sinking tendency, Gyurme Dorje's Mindroling gompa was a solitary Nyingma power in Central Tibet. The degeneracy of the tradition can be assessed by the strength of the renaissance at the end of the 18th century in Kham, where the rimé lamas began the task of collecting and editing texts that had become hopelessly corrupt. It is doubtful indeed that the Nyingma decline ever touched Eastern Tibet, where the Geluks had difficulty in overcoming physical resistance to their hegemony, whereas in Central Tibet they had assumed government at the expense of the red-hat schools.

Jigme may have been referring to the decline of Buddhism in the final five hundred years of buddha-dharma in the kaliyuga, but yet Dzogchen is predicted to boom and spread as the end approaches. He is evidently aware of the cataclysm approaching at the end of that period (*Yeshe Lama* p. 103), an awareness evident perhaps in his remark that 'today we are plagued by trouble and disenchantment'. Rather than ascribe that plaint to a sense

of the perennial misery of samsara, the evidence in this manual of Dzogchen praxis points to deeper and more specific causes for alarm. The first is the venality of the Dzogchen lineages, the slackening of the Nyingma school in the time-gap between Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa, touched upon above, and the second, the more serious, was the contemporaneous political situation.

During Jigme Lingpa's lifetime, the Nyingma sect was under dire pressure, squeezed and slandered. In the light of the political and social conditions of Tibet, to rise in defense of the purity and efficacy of Longchenpa's vision with a loud voice was, perhaps, not rash or ill considered. From Jigme's response it would seem that in this period of Geluk ascendancy, the geshe had riled Jigme beyond toleration. Undoubtedly he had good reason to label the Geluks as the opposition. During his lifetime, the Geluk school was increasing its hegemony and suppressing the other schools to the utmost. This was in spite of the Dalai lamas' secret practice of Dzogchen. (It is important to note, however, that in the recent period of exile Tenzin Gyatso, the XIVth Dalai Lama, has worked hard to eradicate the hostility traditional between Geluk and Nyingma, and has to a large extent succeeded, although some dinosaurs insist on the importation of Central Asian enmities into the West.)

In Tibet, such attitudes translated into political action led to inter-monastery warfare, monks killing monks for no better excuse than theological disagreement, as recently as the early 20th century. In this context, it is necessary to recall that it was a very rough culture up there in the valleys cut into the high Himalayan plateau. Overstretched by the exigencies of survival and reproduction, even given the monastic sanctuaries, the high Vajrayana culture was always delicately poised on the edge of the precipice of barbarism and extinction. The tulku tradition allowed a tiny elite minority, sustained by oppressed peasant serfdom and protected by an aggressive nomad retinue, the privileges of education and a cushion of hermetic security. Except in Lhasa, the haven of the aristocracy, and in a few large monastic cities, where some khenpos and monastic functionaries joined the tulkus in privileged comfort, 'the life of man was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short' and 'everywhere evident there were no arts, no letters, no society'. In brief, evidence of Sakyamuni's first noble truth was always in view on the crudest level.

Finally, in these remarks about polemic, please note that Jigme Lingpa sometimes slips into philosophical asides, which may surprise those who understand that Dzogchen is based upon the existential realization of mind's nature. Dzogchen is different from Vajrayana, says Patrul Rinpoche, in that it rejects logical proofs and scriptural authority in favor of personal experience. Indeed, in his opening verses in the *Yeshe Lama*, Jigme promises to avoid Leapover rhetoric and intellectual analysis and logic, for which we

were grateful, so why does he fall into it in his exposition of Breakthrough? Certainly, he is not waving the flag of radical Dzogchen when he enters into polemics with logicians both Nyingma and Geluk.

Another anomaly, in his advice to students and then in his final discourse, Jigme stresses the need to return to the roots of Buddhism with a critical mind. Through the filter of innate intelligence we should figure what is valid and valuable in the struggle for ultimate understanding of the human condition and to appreciate it fully, optimally, as natural perfection. In the sectarian conflict that Jigme clearly evinces, it is possible to see how degeneracy could occur due to a lapse in confidence in the simple revelation of mystical reality, just as it is, its proponents propagating what they imagined was relevant to their students rather than pointing out the unconditioned unalloyed reality. Unlike in Jigme Lingpa's Tibet, when Dzogchen was already a thousand years old and in decline, in the West the wave of Dzogchen is still cresting and should continue to move towards a crescendo later this century. Rather than change cultural attitudes and eradicate neurotic tendencies, rather than trying to figure out what individuals or any particular social group requires, tailoring the cloth to a presupposed figure, Dzogchen teachers in the West should probably emphasize the essence of the pointing out instruction.

It should be noted in this context that while Jigme Lingpa is uncompromising throughout the text in his assumption of direct experience as the basis of Dzogchen realization, when that mystical experience is unavailable—and even when it is—on the gradual path, study and learning are essential ingredients in the ability to understand what the nature of mind is (*Yeshe Lama* p. 103).

Translation and Purpose

This translation was made for the benefit of students who have received transmission and oral instructions from a teacher and need clarification and elucidation from an authoritative literary source. It is for yogins and yoginis, adepts and practitioners. It is not meant for philosophers or academics.

The stress, then, is on succinct expression for practical application. Subtlety and nuance may have been lost in the process; long sentences in Tibetan are broken down, for example. The translation attempts, wherever possible, to clarify instruction, resolve ambiguities, and turn abstruse Tibetan nuance and allusion into comprehensible English prose. Sometimes, that is not possible because of an absence of English equivalents of Tibetan terms or metaphors, sometimes because of the density or obscurity of the Tibetan meaning, sometimes because an arbitrary meaning has been lost in the recent attenuation of the tradition. Certainly, this translation does not try to reproduce the high literary quality and form of the Tibetan prose—which is anyway inimitable. Nor is it a translation where every word is accounted for

and every instance of a particular word translated by the same English equivalent.

A word about radical translation of the Dzogchen view: the view in its profound and broad definitive reality is a nondual vision and in translation sentence construction should evoke the nondual ethos as much as possible. Of course, the very method of evocation is affected by laying out in space-time what is atemporal and nonspatial. The radical manner of translating Dzogchen texts is based, then, on an assumption of the principle of natural perfection, which underlies the Breakthrough view. If such a radical method can be sustained throughout a translation, then the work has within it a built-in skillful means of inducing the Breakthrough view and with it meditation (nonmeditation) and conduct. The conventional translation based upon an assumption of ignorance requiring strenuous application for change naturally reinforces a sense of inadequacy and need for a goal-oriented process that may or may not lead to attainment of the product at the end of a long road of suffering. The mark of such a conventional translation in Breakthrough, particularly, is the stress given to active 'practice' rather than to 'nonaction', the former characterizing the gradual path of Vajrayana, the latter the all-encompassing realization of Dzogchen.

It is crucial to get the expression of the view succinct and perfectly clear. If the expression—the verbal formulation—is clear, then its intrinsic deconstructive dynamic will automatically engage and nonmeditation will ignite, and the necessary responsive conduct will enact spontaneously. If the verbal expression of the view is unbalanced or incomplete then the nonmeditation will arise only momentarily and be known as a specific insight or discursive realization. Longchenpa's expression in prose and verse is immaculate, perfect, and invokes the nature of mind in its total completion—that is why Longchenpa is called Ngaki Wangpo, Lord of Speech. Although in the Tibetan language we may appreciate Longchenpa's succinct verbalization, because of the cultural dissimilarity of mindset and assumptions about reality that lie within linguistic structure and forms, we cannot depend upon it. For that among many reasons, it is extremely useful to articulate it ourselves in our own language or rather in the language of Dzogchen couched in English or Spanish, or whatever language our network of subtle energy channels employs. Such expression is the potentiation of pure presence (*rikpa*).

Translation of Dzogchen into English has been in process for more than fifty years now, and in the light of the recent understanding of it as separable from Buddhism, its vocabulary is being re-evaluated and revised. First to translate Dzogchen (or rather to edit translation of Dzogchen), W. Y. Evans-Wentz belonged to the pre-'sixties period, which was dominated by the Theosophists Annie Besant and Charles Leadbetter and company. Then Dr. Herbert Guenther, strongly influenced by modern philosophy, created a

revolution in translation in the 'sixties. But subsequent mainstream work has been firmly grounded in Mahayana and Vajrayana vocabulary. A major obstacle to developing a dedicated Dzogchen vocabulary and multivalent English prose has been the dharma-pidgin that lamas barely literate in English used—sometimes quite effectively—to transmit novel notions to students in preverbal trance states. Chogyam Trungpa is long gone and Dungsé Thrinle Norbu has now followed him. The tendency of even non-Tibetan translators to reproduce Tibetan sentence structure within literal translation thus transgressing the habitual speech patterns of our native language may sometimes achieve benefit in Breakthrough, but to replace a rich and flexible pattern by one which is thin and rigid militates against it. A final insult to our language and to Dzogchen emerges from university departments of religion or philosophy where ambitious academics pimp virginal Dzogchen (albeit in ignorance of what they do) by drawing it into the net of comparative and analytic, sophistic philosophy. Their language deracinates and diminishes the Dzogchen that is paradoxical when it is not simple and clear. The failures of Dzogchen translation are multiplied by the tendency of dedicated sectarian buddhist publishers to accept ineptly translated English manuscripts from high profile lineal sources.

Certainly, highly questionable equivalents like 'wisdom' for 'yeshe', as an outstanding example, will be difficult to eradicate on a non-academic level, but as 'existential' rather than 'academic' understanding of Dzogchen increases it will soon be perceived that unless old habits of translation are eradicated the Breakthrough view and nonmeditation will suffer. A glossary of technical terms has been included at the back of the translation, representing the present (although temporary) state of the radical Dzogchen vocabulary, developed over fifty years, in which some questionable and redundant terms are listed and discussed. The two principal innovations in the glossary may be the establishment of the notion of 'in the now' in place of 'primordial' 'from the beginning', etc., and the introduction of 'existential' as descriptive of the natural dispensation of being. Regarding the former, without neglecting a nod to Herr Eckhart Tolle, the Dzogchen Breakthrough view insists upon the matrix of the here and now as the arena of timeless (nondual) cognition, in 'the great time', and in a nonspatial or zero dimension: there is no origin, no primordial depths, no beginning, only 'awareness of the now'. Regarding the latter, the use of 'existential' earths the Dzogchen adept who is about to lose himself in the supernal realm of notional rainbow body. The dharma is experiential-existential rather than notional; reality is here-and-now existential rather than transcendent or otherworldly; nirvana is implicit in existential samsara rather than 'on the other shore'; the natural condition is immanent-existential rather than transcendental or belonging to any other 'state'; authenticity is existential rather than rational or logically consistent. In this way what is existential anchors us to the Leapover meditation in the sensory fields and actualizes the realization of Breakthrough.

Such modifications of our Dzogchen vocabulary may appear to be minor aberrations with only a passing significance. Together with several other biases in technical equivalencies, however, such changes (*lam* as ‘moment of experience; *ye* and *gdod ma'i* as ‘the now’; *yeshe* as ‘awareness of the now’, and so on) underscore the imperative to remember Garab Dorje’s first incisive precept—recognition of the nature of mind. When we abandon recollection of Dzogchen here and now we have lost the essence of the Dzogchen view and copped to the path of the lower approaches where habits of rational thought and our childhood conditioning continue to tyrannize us.

It is worth reiterating that the Dzogchen view should be crystal clear in our minds. To that end, radical Dzogchen translation should make lucidity in English expression priority. Tibetan terms of uncertain meaning should be provided with unequivocal meaning, even if that means simplifying the Tibetan sense. If the Tibetan is purposely ambiguous, then, if possible, its multiple meanings should be expressed even if that requires an explanatory phrase. In the same vein, to stress crucial principles of the view, wherever possible we should insist that Breakthrough meditation (nonmeditation) is not contrived in any way; that goal-orientation is redundant in Breakthrough praxis; that the here and now takes us out of space-time; that the gradual path is a slippery slope to spiritual materialism; and whenever possible we should recall the pathless path.

A note on personal pronouns: if we imagine that the *Yeshe Lama* is actually an oral discourse spoken by a Lama Yeshe giving instruction or advice, he would be speaking down to us, employing the second person plural (you). When he is musing upon the nature of reality and all our experience of it, he would use the first person plural (we). An attempt has been made to follow that rule. Besides, if this text were a handbook for Dzogchen khenpos, a mnemonic aid in their instruction of young yogins in a monastery, they would use the first and second persons plural.

A note on the imperative and hortative voices: in a manual of instruction of this nature, where a sense of urgency informs the teacher’s manner, a sense that this instruction is so crucial to the welfare of the students that they must practice what is taught, use of the imperative mood is a natural inclination. The old lamas with their refined monastic social sensitivity, even when faced with a western-barbarian students, use the imperative very little. Aware that a forced imposition or an inappropriate or inopportune presentation results in mental anorexia, the imperative tense has been replaced by the hortative, which gently exhorts students to take the instruction to heart. In this translation the tone has been moderated so that it would be totally acceptable even to the most sensitive student. After all, conscious imposition of any discipline is a concept quite foreign to Dzogchen—Dzogchen is a natural, extempore, spontaneous arising from neither inside nor outside.

Texts and Sources

The Nyingma lamrim literature is small compared, for example, to the lamrim of the Geluk school. It begins, however, with the *Man ngag lta ba'i 'phreng ba* (a translation can be found in *The Flight of the Garuda*) attributed to Padmasambhava in the 8th century. This work is not structured according to the conventional lamrim and it is incommensurate with the *Yeshe Lama* as it deals largely in mahayoga categories. What is germane to the *Yeshe Lama* is the work of the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (and Chokgyur Lingpa) one of the first set of incarnations of Jigme Lingpa, whose concise mind-terma, the *Lam rim ye shes snying po*, appears to have the *Yeshe Lama* as a root source. Its commentary by Jamgon Kongtrul, also owes much to the *Yeshe Lama*. The *Yeshe Nyingpo* literature clarifies and simplifies Jigme Lingpa's expression, but lacks the richness of his mystical vision. The *Yeshe Nyingpo* has been translated as *The Light of Wisdom* by Erik Pema Kunzang in which the footnotes provide very useful additional commentary by Jamyang Drakpa drawn primarily from the *Yeshe Lama*, but also from the oral instruction of his own lama. There is also a small corpus of untranslated commentarial literature treating the *Yeshe Lama*.

The primary sources of Jigme Lingpa's *Yeshe Lama* are the seventeen tantras of the pith instruction [Secret Precept] series, which serve as the source of the majority of quotations. Further, it is generally supposed that Jigme drew heavily upon the *Vimala Nyingtik*, a work of Longchenpa that synthesized Vimalamitra's texts. The truth of this supposition is substantiated by a look at the brilliant Breakthrough/Leapover pith-instruction lamrim manual composed by Tsultrim Zangpo (Khenpo Tsulo) in the Changter tradition in the 19th century. The Changter (Northern Revelation) lineage was founded by Rikzin Godemchan in the 14th century with a large corpus of terma-treasure revelation called the *Gongpa Zangtel*, *Boundless Vision*. Tsulo's manual, derived from that tradition, in which several important texts of instruction were termas hidden by Vimalamitra, is a model of clear and concise Tibetan prose. At first sight it would appear to have a source in common with the *Yeshe Lama*. This text is not recommended for the purpose of invidious comparative study, but rather to clarify and support oral and literary instruction. Also, this supportive literary material should not detract from the imperative of initial transmission from a lineal mentor, encouraging advice during the practice from an insightful yogin, and after that a debriefing by an experienced guide.

The literature in English translation that could help elucidate Jigme Lingpa's text, besides the *Light of Wisdom* and *Boundless Vision*, is very small. The English language translations of the *Yeshe Lama* text already available need to be read with the Tibetan text at hand. Dudjom Lingpa's Breakthrough instruction called *Mud and Feathers* is useful and Dudjom Rinpoche's short but beautiful pith instruction on Leapover extracted from his manual called

The Wishfulfilling Gem of Siddhis with Gyatrul Rinpoche's excellent, intimate, oral commentary is published under the title *Sublime Dharma*. But together with the translations mentioned above it is restricted. In *Approaching the Great Perfection*, Sam Van Schraik, includes useful translations and critically edited texts of all the major termas of the *Longchen Nyینگtik*.

There are several versions of the *Yeshe Lama* available. I have used the electronic version that is available as a free download at the PKTC, which is a reissue of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's publication. The three volumes of Adzom Drukpa's version is available as a scanned blockprint at the TBRC. A version edited by the unimpeachable hand of Chatral Rinpoche Sangye Dorje is published with Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro's translation. Minor editorial discrepancies and errors (typos) are to be found in all versions, but there are no substantial divergences. I have indicated a few discrepancies in the endnotes. I have taken the Dilgo Khyentse text as a standard.

The Beginning and The End

This Dzogchen manual is such a serious, pedantic, book, instructing us to cool it, and retreat, so that if we do the right exercises we will find the true Dzogchen, the nature of mind. It assumes that the field of our activity, the arena of our playfulness, is the Tibetan plateau with its gompas and lamas, tulkus and monks, libraries and hermitages, Buddhism and Shamanism, devotion and superstition. This is not the case and neither is it possible or desirable. Lhasa for Jerusalem is no fair exchange. Our Western culture may have its faults and inadequacies, but it's what we've got and in it lays the Great Perfection. To move an iota in the direction of changing the cultural field in order to attain the Great Perfection is to fail utterly in an understanding of radical Dzogchen. To construct an agenda to change mind in order to realize its nature militates against the basic understanding of Dzogchen. To lift a selfish finger deprives us of the possibility of a rainbow body and no set of either internal or external conditions has any intrinsic advantage over any other.

Surely, Dzogchen is a large greenhouse full of blossoming flowers and shrubs from the prosaic to the exotic, from tiny ditch flowers to great birds of paradise, their growth and decay accelerated to the speed of light or decelerated to virtual motionlessness. Dzogchen is a vast Noah's ark wherein the animals, birds, insects and fish copulate, give birth, live and die, likewise at breakneck speed or in slow motion. Dzogchen is the Hindustani railway system where hundreds of thousands of trains chug along from place to place crammed with all the multifarious humanity of the earth traveling without apparent purpose from nowhere to nowhere. Dzogchen is the flight paths around the planet filled with planes of all sizes and types swooping, looping, and flying as if just for the pure joy of it. Dzogchen is a Mogul garden where

mothers and babies relax and enjoy in the brocade-decorated pavilions where roses and jasmine entwine the pillars of summerhouses, and where Radha and Krishna disport with the Gopis down by the riverside, and the vibrations of sitar and tabla penetrate the most intimate corners of the mind. Dzogchen is a football match. Dzogchen is a cuckoo's nest where everyone, doctors, patients, and menials included, are overtaken by the lightness of being and the ethos of the sermon on the mount and perform their roles as if choreographed by Robert Crumb. Dzogchen is a vast darkened dome where strangers make romantic love to each other in slo-mo during an ayahuasca ceremony that goes on without break for thousands of years. Dzogchen is Alice's dreamworld of fantastic pleasure down the rabbit hole, where the dakini guru-buddha is orchestrating the supreme *son et lumière*.

The point here is that Dzogchen is all-inclusive, excluding nothing whatsoever. Dzogchen is the legacy of being human and comes in as many forms as unfettered imagination allows.

Secrecy: Protection

The principal reason for the lamas' reluctance to support the publication of Dzogchen texts in translation during the years after their arrival in India and Nepal in exile, it is clear, was their doubt that the appreciative faculty of any non-Tibetan would be equal to the task. They may have been overly protective and unreasonably pessimistic in this regard, but looking over the product of the last fifty years surely they had a point. Regarding this translation, for example, a claim of final authority would be absurd, but grounded in the wisdom of the old Dzogchen lamas who were wise before they came out of Tibet, as the fruit of a lifetime's listening, studying and contemplation it may be of some use to people who are committed to the Dzogchen *kusali* ethos. The urban yogins who have no connection with any traditional teaching may also value its precepts and respond graciously. The most significant quality of this translation, in my mind is its stress upon the nondual aspect of Dzogchen, the radical aspect, the heart of Dzogchen which is overlooked by conventional vajrayanists who hold an attitude that creates hierarchy and abuse.

It should be recognized that restriction of access to these Dzogchen precepts is considered an ideal by conservative Dzogchen lamas. Few traditional teachers will allow access to material containing Breakthrough/Leapover precepts to students who have not yet had meditative experience of nonduality or who are not ready to experience it. If people on the gradual path obtain intellectual information concerning different stages of experience before they are ready to realize them through meditation, they might form obstructive or deviant concepts about them. Later, it may be difficult to determine whether they are realizing those experiences or just imagining

them based on information received prematurely. So until they have completed the preliminary training and have studied the teachings under a qualified master, they should not read books on Dzogchen or try to do Great Perfection meditation on the basis of what they have read in books, on information gleaned during dinner-table conversations or on the internet.

The injunction to refrain from whispering Dzogchen precepts upwind of *shravakas* and those striving in the lower approaches to buddha is said to have been given to protect people whose minds are too frail or innocent or karmically unprepared for nondual teaching. This is an arguable and timorous statement. The injunction to secrecy is given also to protect the teaching from critical abuse in the media, abuse that demeans it and reduces its capacity to affect its magic. This again is unproven and questionable. There may be good reasons, with varying degrees of credibility, to control propagation of Dzogchen, and particularly of this book, but there is no agreement upon how that restriction is to be accomplished, other than to reject commercialization of it, if indeed it is possible to restrict it at all.

The argument for optimal propagation—publish and be damned!—is strong. Here we are at the fag-end of the kaliyuga, with the apocalypse in sight, human suffering at a millennial peak, greed and hatred rampant, overpopulation and climate change threatening annihilation of the species, and no recourse available as effective as Dzogchen. Casualties are inevitable, but surely the enormous benefit that will accrue to human beings through access to this ultimate existential stance vastly outweighs any negative effect. Let the self-secrecy of the text protect it. Let its natural hermetic quality serve us. Let the guardians of the text protect it.

The text is protected by wrathful dakinis. Some people may not believe in the independent external existence of guardian dakinis, and they may feel that the efflorescence of their own awareness is enough to embrace and consume any vengeful spiritual entity. But unless their identity with the nature of mind is complete and seamless, then in a moment of inattention, in the defile between sleep and dream, for example, or perhaps in the bardo of reality, the dakinis will invade their mind and discombobulate it. Dakinis cannot be confronted and defeated. They can only be propitiated by our recognition of them as emanations of mind's nature. If there is any trace of self-ness remaining in the mind, or if there is any residual belief in any externally substantial reality, then we have no recourse but to inure ourselves to their rigorous, merciless, punishment. So, please, follow the constraints placed upon the reading of this Dzogchen manual set out on the Page of Boundless Restriction.

The translator may be a lowly functionary, but I am repeating the prayer of Jigme Lingpa here because the same protectors guard both English and Tibetan books: 'I pray that the guardian dakinis will allow me to reveal the

nature of the vast matrix, which is the immediate vision of Kuntuzangpo, as if it were sitting here in the palm of my hand.' I invoke the guardian dakinis so that through their understanding of whatever pure motivation I possess they will allow me to reveal with a minimum of mistakes the essence of the vision of Longchenpa as filtered through the clear-light mind of Jigme Lingpa, so that those who are ready and able can resonate with the vision of the masters and relax into it, while those who would be injured by it or who would abuse it in any way are deterred or seen off. I invoke them to forgive every fault or error in this work, and to spare me their righteous anger at its imperfections. SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA!

A Northern Treasury: Boundless Vision

First, I owe Tulku Thondrup a great debt for entrusting me with the manuscript of *Boundless Vision* for a final editing. Tulku Thondrup embodies Northern Treasure Dzogchen and his translation of this text should be considered authoritative (despite his disclaimer).

Further, to distinguish this edition, in its publication this profoundly significant text is freed from the narrow limits of sectarian oversight and offered to the broad spectrum of appreciative sangha and nonsectarian practitioners that it demands and deserves.

Boundless Vision must be included amongst the most sacred and significant of Dzogchen manuals. As a Dzogchen *lam-rim* of extraordinary literary quality it transcends all sectarian parameters and reaches the sublime heights of poetic exposition that may induce in the reader the Dzogchen view that it professes to describe. If indeed it fails in this it is due to the limitations of the English language, for Zangtel literature is remarkable for its extraordinary clarity of expression, and Tulku Tsulo's commentary, which may be described as pith instruction (*man ngag*) on the highest Dzogchen level, is a model of precise, intelligent and lucid composition.

Tulku Thondrup finished his translation of *Boundless Vision* text in 2002 and thereafter it was edited by several members of the Kordong sangha. In 2010 when Tulku Thondrup passed it to me, the terminology required standardization and the style was uneven. I have made the style my own and replaced many of the technical terms with my preferences. I hope thereby to have produced a translation that maintains a unity of style and expression. While sometimes expanding the syntax and adding minor discursive elaboration, I have followed Tulku Thondrup's preference for maintaining ambiguity where it exists in the original.

Although comprehending the Tibetan structure of the text undoubtedly proves the most valuable method of approach, I hope that the simplified, westernization of the structure, introducing a succession of related chapters within each of the three parts, will assist the reader. While allowing easier access, meaning derived from the original pyramidal structure will be lost, so I have reproduced that structure as an appendix (in *Boundless Vision*).

I take this opportunity to emphasize Tulku Tsulo's clear assertion that Breakthrough and Leapover relate to obverse sides of the same coin. The precepts of Breakthrough and Leapover can be applied separately, he affirms, but the waist of the vajra symbolizes their union, and therein lies the path (see *Boundless Vision* p. 91).

I would also like to stress that a teacher who has attained the result of the *trekcho* and *togal* yogas is essential to clarify Tulku Tsulo's instructions and that to use this manual without a guru is certain to bring difficulties. A teacher's role in evaluating the results of the meditation, particularly in Leapover, is as important as clarifying the instruction. The abyss that may face those who apply these instructions without a teacher is indicated in the final pages of this text in the section called the Threefold Pledge. Those who study it on an academic level, for pleasure, curiosity or for mere information without intent to practice it, act against the best advice of the tradition, as the text warns us, and also as explained by Tulku Thondrup in the penultimate section of his introduction.

A remark about the context and form of the text: this text belongs to the *lam-rim* genre of Dzogchen manuals and as such may be categorized as a latter-day example of graduated, progressive Dzogchen exegesis. Tulku Thondrup makes this abundantly clear in his introduction, and the structure of the text itself underlines its ladder-like implication. The view in the second part, however, quite distinct from that of the preliminaries, presents Dzogchen in a radical manner, as nondual realization.

Dzogchen for Everyone: The Great Secret of Mind

It should be stressed at the outset that the author of *The Great Secret of Mind*, Tulku Pema Rigtsal Dorje, is a fully ordained buddhist monk. Not only a bhikshu, he is also the abbot of a large, functioning monastery integrated into the social fabric of the Himalayan society that it serves. He has in his charge 150 young and not so young monks who look to him for guidance on the Dzogchen path within the frame of the Nyingma School's religious training. He is also the guiding light of a group of tantric yogins and ngakpas who received Dzogchen instruction from his father, a highly respected tantric yogin from Kham who settled in the Kailash area and built a monastery there in the early part of the 20th century. Further, Pema Rigtsal is steeped in the Tersar tradition of Dudjom Rinpoche Jigtral Yeshe Dorje, another of his root gurus, who was very much concerned with the integration of the monastic and the tantric ethos, and thus emphasized the teaching of the three disciplines—monastic, bodhisattvic and tantric—as unified and non-contradictory. But it is as a buddhist monk whose discipline is derived from the Buddha's *vinaya* and *abhidharma* that Pema Rigtsal teaches Dzogchen.

Tulku Pema Rigtsal's background is important for a number of reasons. First, he is one of the last Tibetan tulkus to receive the benefit of a full traditional training without the interference of Chinese Communist authorities or the distraction of popular Western culture. He is one of only a handful of tulkus who run monasteries in the traditional manner, while ministering to the local community that created them. The western Nepali-Tibetan borderlands in Humla provide that opportunity. Pema Rigtsal received a comprehensive academic training from several highly regarded khenpo scholars in Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, India and also Tibet. This not only gave him grounding in the tradition of the Mahayana sutras but also, in India, opened up a window on the modern, 'westernized', world. To counter-balance that sutric education and to plunge himself deeply into the strictly Tibetan cultural aspect of Vajrayana, he spent seven years in Tibet, five of them at the Dzogchen Gompa in Kham. In that way, he is a tulku who combines the qualities of a buddhist pandita-academic, comfortable in monasteries, with those of a yogi-meditator who knows the rigors of retreat in a snowline hermitage. He has utilized the fruit of this education to teach buddha-dharma in general, and Dzogchen in particular, in South-east and East Asia. He has thereby confronted the quandaries of Vajrayana praxis in the modern world and has arrived at various important conclusions regarding them. Finally, he is a buddhist monk practicing

Dzogchen, and that identity has brought the paradoxical complexities of sutra *vis a vis* Dzogchen into clear focus.

The Great Secret of Mind may appear at first sight, therefore, to be a textbook of graduated, progressive Dzogchen. With its accent on sutric Mahayana Buddhism, it may seem to be written for monks of the Nyingma School. But if we were to sieve out the pure precepts of Dzogchen that are contained herein we would hold in our hands the keys of radical Dzogchen, the pure Dzogchen of the old Tantras. The structure of the text whereby the secret instruction of Dzogchen forms a patchwork together with moralistic homilies and instruction on meditation technique imitates the manner in which recognition of the nature of mind may arise within the framework of the practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. Essentially, then, the message is, 'Catch the ultimate meaning if you can, but otherwise relax in a life of immersion in the tantric cultural traditions of old Tibet until your time is right, or until the synchronicitous moment adventitiously arises.'

For those who are unable to remain in the natural state of the Great Perfection, we teach the mode of striving.

We will be released by the realization that everything is the intrinsic creativity of pure presence. When we fail in this understanding, holding object and subject as two, we wander in samsara where we need to depend upon antidotes and gradual progress on a path of cultivating the good and rejecting the bad.

Until we recognize creativity itself as the magical illusion of pure presence, until we have gained confidence, optimized our creativity, and attained release, we must train on a gradual path.

So long as we are plagued by dualistic concepts, like the viewer of a painting who sees in three dimensions what the artist had painted in two, we must distinguish between view and meditation. For this reason the yogin should strive in his meditation in a secluded place.

Another way of saying it is that until the factors of enlightenment arise synchronistically and adventitiously in the mind then there is nothing better to do than sit and meditate. The merit accumulated may facilitate communication with one's fellow creatures and the environment, because contrived meditation for the most part produces greater facility on the monastic or bodhisattvic path. More specifically, the meditative techniques of shamata (calm-abiding) and vipasyana (insight meditation) are most usefully practiced in the absence of realization of the view, or in the case of some kind of permanent regression from the view. When the lama is preaching the value of the graduated path insisting upon the importance of shamata as the method of talking us up the ladder of Dzogchen through the stages of *trekcho* and *togal*, rather than providing a method of realization he is preaching the value of monastic Vajrayana culture. If shamata were effective in the recognition of the nature of mind the world would be full of Dzogchen masters.

But in actuality, the intrinsic awareness of the Great Perfection is not produced or initiated by causes and conditions, for the potential of being and awareness is intrinsically present and manifests spontaneously.

Apply effort to cultivate the sutric approach to buddha but allow not even a tit of aspiration to arise regarding the pure presence of rikpa.

The culture of monasticism, preferred by the Tibetans since the second propagation of the dharma in Tibet, may be a superior way of life in comparison with liberal market capitalism, but it does not specifically facilitate experiential understanding of the nature of mind or spontaneous release in the timeless moment of the here and now more than any other culture. In so far as the Tibetan monasteries drew in all types of minds from all social classes, those minds were all expected to enter the tunnel of learning that began with the sutras and ended with Vajrayana praxis. That curriculum contained no element that on its own could supply the wherewithal of Garab Dorje's first precept—recognition of the nature of mind. Buddhist (and also Bon) monasticism had greatly overshadowed and suppressed the old shamanism that did in fact contain no small measure of experiential and initiatory skillful means.

In order that all applicants diligently settle down to a monastically based life of study, reflection and contemplation they must possess an inner conviction that the progressive path of the Vajrayana does indeed lead to consummate Dzogchen; skillful introduction to goals and techniques provides and supports that conviction.

Whether we wish to meditate through inseparable shamata and vipasyana in the ultimate Great Perfection manner, or whether we seek the five supersensory powers and temporary happiness in the realms of the gods or of men, first, in order to become fit for the task, we need to cultivate the mind just as we need to cultivate a field to prepare it for crops. If we train in shamata at the beginning, we prepare for the pure presence of the Great Perfection.

To reveal that vision we need to have confidence in meditation. If we lack that confidence, we will not be able to remove the veil of dualistic delusion. What we call 'meditation' is nothing but a confident view, keeping pure presence fixed leisurely within that view. When we have gained confidence in meditation, all the phenomena of samsara, nirvana and the path from one to the other arise as forms of emptiness, apparent yet nonexistent. Those forms are the path, and traversing it there is neither hatred for an enemy nor love for a friend, neither hope for nirvana nor fear of samsara. Moreover, when our potential for such meditation is realized, both samsara and nirvana are bound together in the one cosmic seed free of all conceptual elaboration, and whatever we have specified, focused on, imagined, referenced, or elaborated will gradually vanish like mist dissipating in the sky.

But in this work, insofar as Vajrayana and Dzogchen are considered, in the same breath, as it were, the author lets the cat out of the bag when it is made clear that direct experience of the nature of mind cannot be induced while

under a cloud of dualistic thinking on any of the nine approaches, which include Breakthrough and Leapover.

Applying ourselves to a process with ordinary people's impure delusions of vision, or with the pure or impure vision of the yogin, as the case may be, or even with pure buddha-vision, there is no way to avoid the distinctions inherent in rejection of some appearances, acceptance of antidotes, the graduation of stages and paths, and the difference between karmic cause and effect.

Buddha will never be attained on the paths of the nine graduated approaches. Why not? Because in the views of the nine approaches there is only intellectual conjecture which sometimes is convincing and sometimes not, but which can never induce the naked essence.

Pure presence is primordially free of conceptual elaboration and is the actual natural contemplation of the minds of all buddha. Putting any effort into it and adulterating it by concepts tends to conceal its nature and provides no benefit. We need, therefore, to abandon all effort along with deductive reasoning and speculative concepts.

Shamata meditation technique is not exempt from a blanket rejection of all contrived meditation methods.

During formal contemplation gross happiness and sadness will not arise, but when we get up from shamata practice the joy or the pain will come as before. Just as we contain a heap of dust by sitting down slowly on it, but upon our getting up the dust arises in clouds, in the concentrated absorption of child's play gross thoughts are stopped for a while and we seem to experience happiness, but when we arise from the concentration we find that more gross thoughts intrude than before.

Shamata, concentrated absorption, does not induce recognition of the nature of mind, but it can provide a relative calm in which to appreciate the profound refinements of cultural Vajrayana. Indeed no cause or condition can make manifest the realization of pure awareness as the ground from which all causal phenomena arise. However, it is the defining belief of this latter-day Dzogchen lineage that the rikzin-lama is the doorway into the natural state of mind, the timeless moment of the here and now.

To find the natural state of mind in the Great Perfection, there is no other way than through a lama; furthermore, we need to depend upon such a one with faith, pure vision and devotion.

The rikzin-lama is he in whom the inexpressible nature of mind effloresces as a constant illusory display of clear light. Or rather it is he who we recognize as buddha.

If we recognize our lama as buddha, then we will receive the blessings of buddha; if we recognize our lama as a yogi, then we will receive the blessings of a yogi; and if we see our lama as an ordinary human being, then we will receive no blessing at all.

In this way those of 'middling acumen', those who do not realize the nature of mind immediately it is pointed out to them, those who immerse themselves in

the religio-cultural modes of the tradition, attain the understanding of the spaciousness of pure presence where the dichotomy of relative and absolute no longer occur.

Even though they practice that graduated, progressive mode, their view is still based in the Great Perfection. Since the great bliss of the bodhi-mind is the root of all experience, it has the power to cure every sickness that afflicts us.

Those who cannot abide in the effortless Great Perfection are taught the path that requires exertion while striving. In the view of the Great Perfection they also will succeed.

In this way a life of meditation praxis is open to all, on any of the nine levels of approach, each involving a different life style. On the sutric path buddhist culture induces some happiness in this lifetime, prepares those of middling acumen for death and the advent of the bardos in which buddhahood may indeed be attained, and failing that a better rebirth. Making no clear distinction between the psychological and the cultural, the nine levels of the Vajrayana path vary according to the manner of cultural conditioning. The dharma agenda in the Nyingma scheme of things, therefore, is to provide socially beneficial cultural activity for people across a range of differing aspiration and personality type. The specific modes offered are monastic, householder and renunciate. The activity in these varying lifestyles, through time, may modify our karma, change our habits and thereby induce a better rebirth, but it will not in itself take us an iota closer to the Great Perfection. If and when these monks, bodhisattvas and yogins on the graduated path become aware of the nature of mind in the Dzogchen view and fall into the state of nonmeditation, they do not drop the lifestyle that is consistent with their buddhist vows. Consonant with the atiyoga precept 'without acceptance or rejection', they continue on the graduated path of the sutras without changing anything at all. But in a mind suffused by the view and meditation of Dzogchen the precept of nonaction necessarily engages, and although from the outsider's point of view a monk or bodhisattva may still seem to be striving on the graduated path, internally the Dzogchen ethos has come to be the apex of his outlook, presiding over any other approach.

What this boils down to in practice for the Tibetan is that if his initiatory experience has not provided him with the Dzogchen view and its corollary of nonmeditation, then he must be satisfied with the daily round of his religious culture. His religious practice may consist of the ascetic hermetic lifestyle of the yogin practicing the creative stage or the fulfillment stage. It may be the neophyte practicing his ngondro preparatory practices in a semi-retreat situation. It may be the lay tantrika ngakpa whose lifestyle involves endless ritual designed to attain buddha or, more likely, to benefit himself and others on a material plane. It may be a householder committed to his family and professional duties and deeply engaged in his devotions and good works. It may be the sutric meditator who lives a pure lifestyle, ordained or not, engaged

essentially in constant shamata or vipasyana meditation. In old Tibet it could have been any of these styles of religious occupation, all denominated as gradual methods leading to enlightenment. In the Dzogchen view, however, they are merely forms of religious culture to be bathed in its illumination.

For all these religious people Dzogchen is approached from outside and below as a goal only to be invoked in prayer, a carrot extended beyond the donkey's nose to make him run. In H.H. the Dalai Lama's famous exposition of Dzogchen at Lerab Ling in France, for instance, he spoke mainly *round about* Dzogchen, describing it from the platform of the graduated path. Naturally enough from that point of view he stressed the cultural aspect of Dzogchen, the Vajrayana basis and groundwork, the context of lama worship and devotion, rather than providing the essential precepts of the view and meditation. Perhaps this emphasis on the maturation of the student's mind is derived from the necessity in the Tibetan monastic environment to cultivate the untrained minds of Tibetan nomads and farmers by means, for example, of the madhyamika dialectic. But reasoning does not lead to the recognition of the nondual nature of mind. As Patrul Rinpoche makes very clear in his *Three Incisive Precepts*, the Dzogchen method is grounded in experience. Those who cannot recognize what is immediately in front of their noses here and now can, perhaps, recognize the clear light in the bardo of reality. Otherwise, in both this life and the next they should immerse themselves in the religious culture of Vajrayana, in study of the sutras and buddhist logic on the progressive path of spiritual materialism. In that way the Dalai Lama is here in line with the mainstream of Dzogchen teachers in the latter days in stressing the relativist, space-time aspect of Dzogchen rather than its mystical nondual core.

The proponents of this sutric Dzogchen design their lives according to the graduated path described by the Mahayana sutras, and fill it with the ethos of the bodhisattva vow, and strive on the difficult path of self-sacrifice. They may take the logical step of ordination and practice tantric ritual in order to speed up the process of attainment of their altruistic goals. In that arena the processes of karmic causality are dominant and all consuming and the slow process of purification of karmic conditioning—or rather the reconditioning of the mind—proceeds over many lifetimes or for eons. In the valleys of Tibet, therefore, buddhist religious activity was the form demonstrated by Dzogchen yogins and yoginis, particularly before the Chinese invasion, when Tibet's political structure was theocratic. In the Himalayan borderlands—in Dolpo for example—farming or yak herding may be the principal activity of the Dzogchen yogi. In the exiled refugee community, he may be a doctor or a priest, a trader or a farmer, an artisan or shopkeeper.

The three-in-one ideal that Dudjom Rinpoche has taught, particularly in his commentary on *Ascertaining the Three Vows* by Ngari Panchen, is predicated upon the assumption that the yogin has been inducted into the three levels of Tibetan Vajrayana praxis. These three consist of the sutric ordination that comes with

a disciplinary codex; the bodhisattva vow of perfection of wisdom; and the tantric SAMAYAS that imply the predominance of primal awareness. These three sets of vows may be related to outer, inner and secret levels of practice. The monastic training is the outer; the flexible, superior moral training is the inner; and in secret the tantric SAMAYA vows are sustained. These three levels are integrated into a single lifestyle and religious persona that we can identify in the Nyingma yogin whether dressed as a monk, layman, or ngakpa. The activity of this society of religious practitioners constitutes the *culture* of the Nyingma school and the praxis of this culture is independent and continues whether or not it is illumined by the Dzogchen view. If it is indeed infused by the Dzogchen view then it becomes the karmic form presented by the spontaneity of the view. The culture becomes the karma that is infused with light and awareness and eventually is exhausted in the rainbow body or body of light. If the Dzogchen view as an existential reality has not yet suffused that culture then, as mentioned above, the individual cultivates the cultural form with the certainty of progressing along the path of the bodhisattva and refining the karma that may lead to a higher rebirth.

It seems evident and of huge importance to the vitality and continuation of the essence of the Tibetan tradition—Dzogchen Atiyoga—that it should not become mixed up with culturally specific qualities and modes. If Dzogchen remains a factor of Vajrayana while Vajrayana remains a bundle of quasi-shamanic Central Asian concepts and quasi-Hindu tantric rituals and concepts, it continues to be unattractive and irrelevant to the contemporary global mainstream of science and technology. Some lamas of the tradition, particularly Dudjom Rinpoche and Dungse Thrinle Norbu Rinpoche, showing the qualities of flexibility and incisive responsiveness that demonstrate their mastery, adapted the traditional forms of teaching and exposition to the needs of their western disciples. With the difficult recognition that westerners were not to be monks or religious practitioners in the Himalayan mold, the realization dawned that western spiritual culture (and particularly the hippie culture that greeted the refugee lamas in India) needed only a minute shift of aspiration to allow the magic of the Dzogchen view to work. These masters saw no need for western cultural forms to be radically changed and transmogrified into some kind of Tibetan clone-culture, but rather by a simple redirection towards the ideal of the Great Perfection those in whom the natural state of being was incipiently blossoming could be infused by its illuminating spaciousness and awareness.

Westerners gazing closely at Tibetan monasticism, while retaining deep respect—even to a fault—tend to perceive it as a kindergarten stage. The cultural function of the monasteries has changed in the refugee society (although not much in Tulku Pema Rigtsal's gompa), becoming the means whereby the traditional culture is conserved and sustained particularly through the education of boys who have no initial intention of becoming monks but who cannot afford, or do not possess, the means of attaining a western-style

education in a modern institution. But the epithet 'kindergarten' not only denominates the function of education of children and their socialization, but also the training of the few monks whose karma is suited to a lifetime of study, recollection and meditation in the Mahayana sutras, in buddhist logic, in spiritual aspiration, in physical and moral training, and in the priestly functions, such as sanctifying rites of passage.

It is unfortunate that certain ancient buddhist monastic and atavistic Tibetan attitudes are conserved in the monasteries. Faint traces of these attitudes peer through Pema Rigtsal's anecdotes in his text. buddhist societies have always upheld the superiority of the monastic ideal and its necessity, and monks of course are the first to support such a view. Denigration of the lay option and the 'sadhu' mode follow automatically. The superior and slightly disparaging attitude to women—including nuns—is sometimes painfully felt, by feminists in particular. Materialism and its financial status-structured hierarchy is presented—and disdained—as a particularly Western affliction, while it should be evident by now that Asia in general and Tibetans in particular are plagued with gross materialistic attitudes. Such attitudes are held in the first place due to naïve adulation of the high technology developed in the West and only recently available in Asia, and in the second because wealth and conspicuous consumption are seen to indicate the favor of the gods—and therefore merit and virtue—amongst the wealthy.

So, finally, *The Great Secret of Mind* contains secret Dzogchen precepts hidden amongst excerpts from a manual of sutric Buddhism together with some gems of tantric instruction. Some readers will understand the sutric path of monasticism in which Tulku Pema Rigtsal is situated as the cultural context, and Dzogchen Ati as the mystical experience unfolding within it, unmarked by monasticism. To put it another way, consonant with Mahayana dogma, the temporal sutric path provides the form and the Dzogchen view-*cum*-meditation the emptiness. The sutric path, determined by karma, provides the space-time context, which in timeless awareness of the here and now becomes the pure presence of Dzogchen. The lesson in this for the post-renaissance, post-reformation West, where secular and lay cultures have been confounded for several hundred years, and in the developed far-eastern societies into which those attitudes have been transposed, the Dzogchen yogin is completely anonymous, free of any attribute by which he could be recognized. His activity cannot be defined. His behavior cannot be described. His conduct does not accord to any agenda. He wears no badge or hat by which he can be labeled or compartmentalized. If his karma is not exhausted in a rainbow body, his activity will appear from the outside to be consonant with his personal karma. If the spontaneity that is naturally induced by the recognition of the alpha-purity of all experience demonstrates an egoless awareness of the dynamic necessity of the totality, cushioned by the vibration of a bodhisattva, it will be appreciated probably only subliminally by those who witness it.

The last word from Pema Rigtsal himself:

In reality all phenomena are merely mental labels and in reality not the smallest thing exists to be cultivated or rejected. The yogin or yogini who takes this view pays no attention to the level of approach regarding his attachment to the objective material aspect of his nominal experience nor to the degree of emotional attachment. Nor does he make any distinction between high and low view and nor does he pay heed to the speed of accomplishment on that path.

Lama in Action: Mountain Dharma

In Tibet, mountain retreat in a cave or hermitage was the crucible of existential training. The great lamas of the tradition gained their realization in that way. In exile, the young tulkus pay lip-service to that tradition but most have relied on close association with their teachers and then closet themselves for extended periods in meditation centers. In our Western retreat centers we have copied this compromise between a hermitage and a monastery with varying results. Bearing in mind the difficulty of finding a mountain retreat in the West that approximates Dudjom Rinpoche's ideal, the Lama urges Dzogchen aspirants to take a more extreme and committed path and to cultivate the qualities of renunciation in a secluded meditation cell.

In *Mountain Dharma: The Alchemy of Realization* Dudjom Rinpoche assumes that we do indeed need to cultivate the qualities of renunciation. We need to use our aspiration to abandon our inherited social and political system and its sticky imperatives and we need to remove ourselves from the proximate causes of sensory attachment. We leave our homeland, first of all, and leave behind a large part of our mental baggage and let another large part atrophy from lack of attention. When the time is ripe we meet a teacher and obtain initiation, authorization and oral instruction, and then we find a secluded hermitage in which to ripen our minds.

Certainly, there is no need to take this literal ascetic approach if we can find a cave in the mind rather than on the mountain top. There is no need to move out of the urban environment if we are based in a space of inner detachment. There is no need to avoid sex and war if our Dzogchen view and meditation is complete, and perfectly compassionate. The Dzogchen method and schedule supports this view, and meditation practiced in the city and the urban yogin are the putative results. The difficulties of this path, however, are evident to anyone who has lived it. We have been educated and conditioned to exist in the cultural mainstream and it is so easy to be pulled out of our cave of renunciation by the needs of survival and the intensity of the sensual and intellectual stimuli so readily available.

To assist us to remain in that inner cave there is nothing like a bit of celibacy, for instance, at least in the initial phase of renunciation, to get our sexual needs into perspective and keep our sexual fluids racing. A natural fast not only cleanses the stomach but it may take the obsession out of our gluttony. A period of simple happy living in country seclusion reduces the demands of consumerist

city dwelling and its moneymaking imperatives. Make space between the mind and its objects of attachment and the sticky adhesive that creates confusion and delusion is dissolved, and clarity resumes. The renunciate mind puts space between samsara and ourselves and allows the superior aspiration for nirvana to click in.

Yes, of course, samsara is nirvana, but that old saw is more often used as an excuse for self-indulgence and distraction than the basis of the existential Dzogchen view. And, yes, the Dzogchen view, which is the foundation of all Dzogchen meditation, is inalienable and inescapable and can never be compromised. But the very act of reading this text, in many cases, indicates backsliding in meditation practice and implies a need for the renunciate view that may re-establish motivation for it. Always intrinsically based in the Dzogchen view and meditation, any means whatsoever may be utilized to regain full recognition of it. The renunciate mindset is a very valuable and effective skillful means.

In the short work on *Mountain Dharma*, in which he gives practical personalized advice to Dzogchen aspirants, Dudjom Rinpoche assumes that his disciples have been born and bred in a traditional society that supports awareness-aspiration. He elucidates the traditional Nyingtik method that begins at the beginning and continues through the middle to the end. Renunciation and mountain retreat are ideals that perhaps only very fortunate Westerners can pursue. But regardless of the exigencies of our practical situations at least his advice should provide inspiration.

The key term *rikpa* always requires annotation because we have yet to agree upon an English equivalent. 'Knowledge', 'intrinsic awareness', 'gnosis', and *rikpa* untranslated, have all been superseded in my translation by 'pure presence'. *Rikpa* could also be rendered as 'nondual awareness', and in *rikpa*'s 'nondual' nature lies the problem because 'nondual' is beyond concept and expression. 'Emptiness in essence, clarity in nature, and compassion in expression' is as far as the tradition will go in defining *rikpa*.

It should be noted that this brilliant short text of Dudjom Rinpoche Jigtral Yeshe Dorje (1904—1987) is from the traditional mold where Dzogchen is inseparable from the Vajrayana of the Ngagyur Nyingma tradition. Here, Dzogchen is bound up with Tibetan Buddhism, which carries it and forms a basis for its practice. It was written for Tibetans in Old Tibet where retirement to a hermitage was as easy as falling off a log and was expected of anyone—excluding tulkus—who had serious existential aspirations. As such, Tibetan cultural assumptions are implicit in it, assumptions that in general are at best irrelevant to Western Dzogchen aspirants and at worst lead away from his/her primary purpose—realization of the nature of mind. The text may be treated as an anthropological resource; but it only requires discriminating filtration to become a mine of useful precepts for radical Dzogchen practice.

Homage to the Guru-Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche!

Dudjom Rinpoche's work and life provided a brilliant, paradigmatic, example of a Tibetan *rikeyin*'s responsiveness. Immensely generous and skillful in means, he lived during a difficult historical moment for his tradition. Further, through this *Mountain Dharma* exposition, a short but seminal exposition of the Dzogchen view, Dudjom Rinpoche places himself amongst the great masters of the Tibetan language and yogins of the tradition along with Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa. Homage to Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche!

The author of this *Mountain Dharma* is one of the great masters of the Dzogchen dharma in these latter days. Among those who were aware of his life and work he was known to live in the stratosphere of Dzogchen achievement. That he was virtually unknown except to an inner circle of yogins and scholars is evidence of the invisibility that protected his family and his dharma, and the humility that enwrapped his precious life. His scholarship, made tangible in his books, is an external mark of his brilliance, but in the minds of those who knew him his personal radiance and kindness is a better index of his achievement. As a young and impressionable acolyte and pilgrim in the 'sixties, I knew him from afar, but I felt then as I still do fifty years later, that I gained concord with one of the buddha-hearts of his generation.

In 1967 in Kalimpong, West Bengal, we met him for the first time. In response to the bell, he himself opened the door of the rose-covered portico of his English-style cottage on the outskirts of Kalimpong in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas. I offered him a *katak*, fruit and the letter of introduction from Tulku Pema Wangyel, Kanjur Rinpoche's son. I was invited in, sat down and offered tea, overwhelmed by an avuncular display of his generosity. He inquired after Kanjur Rinpoche, and he immediately understood that I was like Kanjur Rinpoche's child. He told me that he and Kanjur Rinpoche were one and the same, which in my mind seemed then to conjure a Janus type two-headed guru-deity. Like a koan that induces experience of the nature of buddha-reality, this pronouncement was the first and most lasting of his verbal introductions to the nature of mind and was to stay with me. Dudjom Rinpoche then took me to visit his Zangdok Peri gumpa which was then in process of construction around the mountain in Kalimpong.

A few years later Dudjom Rinpoche came with his wife and daughters to live in Kathmandu, where I was then living, and I had more access to him. On certain days he was available for *darshan*, for blessing, for providing oracular answers to personal problems, or for answering scholarly enquiries or discussing meditation issues. On such an occasion in 1979 he blessed the rings that my wife and I exchanged in a loose ceremony that did not bind us together as man and wife but rather provided a sense of spiritual union in Dzogchen. Besides the elevated sense of Dzogchen that was always available in our meetings with him, there prevailed a sense of urgency to receive the atiyoga

Dzogchen precepts from this most perfect tulku and lama. From time to time when the moment appeared propitious, I would prevail upon him for formal precepts. On one occasion, with my friend Mario Maggietti, we encountered him just as he prepared to leave the house and in a flurry of hurry took us with him along the lanes in the vicinity and out onto the main palace road, and as we three picked our way across that wide tightly crowded thoroughfare he gave us the discursive Dzogchen instruction on 'abiding, moving and pure presence' (*gnas 'gyu rig gsum*), one of the more mind (read 'intellect') boggling Dzogchen precepts, and then, when we reached the footpath on the other side of the road, he sent us on our way.

Dudjom Rinpoche was a family man, husband to a high society second wife, in the 'seventies parenting two attractive teenage daughters. His house was full of Kathmandu family life, in the middle of which he appeared to sit with an imperturbable buddha smile. But in his ritual stance he carried the sense of higher seriousness to a level of perfect awareness. This stance was demonstrated optimally when in the winter of 1977-78 he gave the empowerments and permissions for practice of the *Dudjom Tersar*, the canon of ritual and yogic texts that his tulku predecessor, Dudjom Lingpa, and he himself, had revealed. Just outside the built-up area of Boudha, off the main road, several paddy fields were covered in tented canvas and every day for a month, the Nyingma Dzogchen fraternity, tulkus and gomchens, the cream of Himalayan hermits, yogins, scholars and monks, together with droves of hardy lay people, coming from every nook and cranny of the Tibetan ethnic area, gathered to receive *wang* and *lung* (empowerment and authorization), together with blessings from the most vaunted lama in the Tibetan exodus. Some days were warm and dry and a smiling picnic vibe prevailed; sometimes it was cold and wet, and morose lay people piled in and fought for dry spaces. The privileged Injis sat, no less wet, in a secluded area—perhaps there were twenty of us there. In that way, Dudjom Rinpoche, receiving his justly deserved acclamation in the mud of exile, transmitted the heart of his dharma.

In 1970 through pure happenstance, we were present in Delhi in the Ashoka Hotel when Sonam Kasi was paying his respects to Dudjom Rinpoche before his departure for the USA, where in New York he was to become an esteemed teacher of the Nyingma dharma. Harold Talbot, the erstwhile American interpreter for an itinerant christian monk, who was now a devoted acolyte of Dudjom Rinpoche (and later the editor of Tulku Thondrup's translations), was one of those present. At this gathering I first encountered Sogyel Rinpoche, the heart-son of Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, one of the Tibetan Nyingma aristocracy and lama elite. Sogyel founded *Rigpa*, the Dzogchen sect, in London, which more than any other organization was to represent the Nyingma School in the UK. I am including Sogyel Rinpoche's eulogy of Dudjom Rinpoche here because it catches the extraordinary devotion that Dudjom Rinpoche inspired in those who received his blessing.

These following paragraphs are taken from the foreword to the translation of Dudjom Lingpa's *Visions of the Great Perfection*.¹⁶

I would like to take this opportunity to share a few memories of Kyapje Dudjom Rinpoche, whom I had the privilege and blessing of knowing personally. I first met him thanks to my master Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro. He always used to talk about what a wonderful and realized master Dudjom Rinpoche was, and how he was the living representative of Guru Padmasambhava. They held each other in the highest esteem. In Lhasa, where they met in the 1950s, Dudjom Rinpoche confided to [the late] Trulshik Rinpoche that he considered Jamyang Khyentse the holiest master they could ever hope to find. Dudjom Rinpoche moved to Kalimpong in India in around 1957, and my master [Jamyang Khyentse] took me to meet him and receive blessings. Dudjom Rinpoche gave him the 'seal of authorization' for all of his own terma treasures. He also conferred on Jamyang Khyentse the empowerments and instructions for his mind treasure of Dorje Drolo, the wild, wrathful aspect of Guru Padmasambhava. They wrote long-life prayers for each other. My master spoke of Dudjom Rinpoche as 'the authentic great Sovereign Lord of the extraordinary and profound secret terma treasures'. Dudjom Rinpoche called him 'the sole champion in our time of the great and supreme path of the Vajra Heart-Essence, the magical wisdom manifestation of the lotus-born lord Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra'.

Some years later, I went to visit Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong and by coincidence found myself translating for one of his American disciples. It was then that I realized just how extraordinary he was. By the end of his teaching, a pointing-out instruction of the nature of mind, tears were running down my face, and I understood what Jamyang Khyentse had meant when he said this was an exceptional master. I instantly felt enormous faith in him, and there and then I humbly requested Dudjom Rinpoche to be my master and grant me teachings.

Dudjom Lingpa's revelations and Dudjom Rinpoche's terma cycles are together known as the *Dudjom Tersar*, the 'New Treasures of Dudjom', which are new in the sense that they are still fresh with the warm breath of the dakinis, and because there is only one master in the lineage between Guru Rinpoche and the practitioners of the heart treasures. Although I see these two great masters as one and the same, their outward characters were quite different. Dudjom Lingpa was a commanding and unpredictable figure, known for his wrathful demeanor and unpredictable behavior. Dudjom Rinpoche describes how to visualize him: 'His body is red in color, his beard reaching as far as his heart, and his eyes are open wide, staring steadily straight ahead. His long hair is mostly tied up in a knot on top of his head with a small sacred book, while the rest tumbles loosely over his shoulders. He wears a gown of reddish brown silk, a shawl of white cotton, and conch-shell earrings, with a sword of wisdom thrust through his belt. His right hand wields a Vajra in the sky, and his left

hand rolls a *phurba* dagger of meteoric iron. He sits with his left leg stretched out slightly in the posture of royal play.'

In marked contrast, Dudjom Rinpoche had about him an air of captivating kindness, gentleness, and serenity. In fact, he used to tell a story about his predecessor that always brought a twinkle to his eye. When Dudjom Lingpa was about to pass away and leave this world, some of his disciples approached him timidly and begged him to return in a more peaceful form. He chuckled and said, 'Well, all right. But don't complain if I am too peaceful.'

Like his previous incarnation, Dudjom Rinpoche was a very great Dzogchen master. It is said of him that he was the body emanation of Khyeuchung Lotsawa, the speech emanation of Yeshe Tsogyel, and the mind emanation of Guru Padmasambhava. In the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, I tried to sum up some of his characteristics: 'He was small, with a beautiful and gentle face, exquisite hands, and a delicate, almost feminine presence. He wore his hair long and tied up like a yogin in a knot; his eyes always glittered with secret amusement. His voice seemed the voice of compassion itself, soft and a little hoarse.' One of the Padmasambhava's terma prophecies captured his qualities with remarkable prescience: 'In a noble family there will appear an emanation of Khyeuchung Lotsawa bearing the name Jnana, keeping the yogic discipline of a master of mantras, his appearance not fixed in any way, his behavior spontaneous like a child, and endowed with piercing wisdom. He will reveal new termas and safe ward the ancient ones, and he will guide whoever has a connection with him to the Glorious Copper Colored Mountain in Ngayab Ling.'

Dudjom Rinpoche, I learned, began receiving termas when he was a young boy, and he met Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tsogyel in a vision when he was only thirteen. Although he revealed his own powerful terma treasures, he decided to prioritize maintaining, protecting, and spreading the older termas as well as the Kama tradition of the Nyingma. While still quite young, he was regarded as a supreme master of the great perfection, and by the time he was in his thirties he had already accomplished an enormous amount. When other lamas saw his famous prayer *Calling the Lama from Afar*, which he composed at the age of thirty and which captured completely his profound realization, they immediately recognized him as a great tertön and Dzogchen master. Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche told me that his father, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, one of the greatest teachers of Dzogchen and Mahamudra in recent times, used to say that if anyone ever wondered what a true Dzogchen master and practitioner was like, they only had to look at Dudjom Rinpoche. His eyes always sparkled with a kind of freshness and vibrant clarity. Unencumbered by opinions of good and bad, and ever carefree, spacious, and relaxed, Dudjom Rinpoche had about him a child-like innocence—you could call it an enlightened purity.

His work in compiling the *Nyingma Kama*, which he began at the age of seventy-four, paralleled the achievement of Jamgon Kongtrul in compiling the treasure teaching in the *Precious Treasury of Termas* (*Rinchen gter mdzod*). He saved many precious texts and sacred relics from loss, and with meticulous care, he compiled, preserved, emended, and annotated the older texts and practices, to the extent that there seems hardly anything he did not have a hand in perfecting. In fact, Dudjom Rinpoche's achievements for the Nyingma tradition as a whole were monumental. He gave the transmission of the *Precious Treasury of Termas* ten times, and he transmitted the *Kama* (*Snying ma bka' ma*) and *The Hundred Thousand Tantras of the Nyingma* (*Snying ma rgyud 'bum*) as well as countless treasure cycles and priceless teaching. Unanimously requested to become the supreme head of the Nyingma tradition in exile, his own revelations and writings fill twenty-five volumes, among which his *History of the Nyingma* and *Fundamentals of the Nyingma* are classics. His compositions were amazing, his scholarship famous, his calligraphy much copied, his poetry lucid yet profound, and his detailed knowledge of every aspect of Vajrayana practice and ritual truly phenomenal.

Dudjom Rinpoche also played a huge part in reestablishing Tibetan culture and education in exile, and he composed his *History of Tibet* at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. On occasion, His Holiness has expressed his regret at not having been able to receive transmissions directly from Dudjom Rinpoche, although when he embarked on a retreat on the Kapje—Eight Great Practice Mandalas—according to the *sangwa gyachan* pure visions of the great Fifth Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche wrote a practice guide for him that he found outstanding. Among Dudjom Rinpoche's countless disciples were the most eminent lamas of the last century, including the most senior masters of Mindroling and Dorje Drak monasteries, and he had innumerable followers all over Tibet and the Himalayas, Europe, America, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. When he gave the transmission of the *New Treasures of Dudjom* at Boudhanath in Nepal in 1977-78, thousands upon thousands flocked to attend.

After my master Jamyang Khyentse passed away, Dudjom Rinpoche held me with all his care and compassion, and I had the privilege of serving as his translator for a number of years. I quickly discovered that he had a unique way of inspiring the realization of the innermost nature of mind. It was through the very way he spoke. The words he used were simple and down to earth, and yet they had a way of penetrating right into your heart. As the instructions on the nature of mind flowed effortlessly from his wisdom mind, it seemed as if he became the teaching of Dzogpachenpo itself, and his words served to gather you into the actual experience. Through his presence, and through his gaze, he created a subtle but electrifying atmosphere, enveloping you in his wisdom mind, so that you could not help but feel the pure awareness that he was pointing at. I can only compare it to sitting in front of a blazing, open fire—you cannot help but feel warm. It was as simple as that. Dudjom Rinpoche

demonstrated, again and again, that when a great master directs the blessing of his wisdom mind, something extraordinary and very powerful can take place. All your ordinary thoughts and thinking are disarmed, and you arrive face to face with the deeper nature—the original face—of your own mind. In Dudjom Rinpoche's words, 'all the stirrings of discursive thoughts melt, dissolve, and slip into the expanse of rikpa, your pure awareness, which is like a cloudless sky. All their power and strength is lost to the rikpa awareness.' At the moment everything drops, a completely different dimension opens up, and you glimpse the sky-like nature of mind. With Dudjom Rinpoche I came to understand that what the master does, through the power and blessing of his realization, is to make the naked truth of the teaching come alive in you, connecting you to your buddha-nature. And you? You recognize, in a blaze of gratitude, that there is not, and could never be, any separation between the master's wisdom-mind and the nature of your own mind. Dudjom Rinpoche said just this in his *Calling the Lama from Afar*:

Since pure awareness of nowness is the real buddha, / In openness and contentment I found the lama in my heart. / When we realize this unending natural mind is the very nature of the lama, / Then there is no need for attached, grasping, or weeping prayers or artificial complaints. / By simply relaxing in this uncontrived, open, and natural state, / We obtain the blessing of aimless self-liberation of whatever arises.

At the same time, Dudjom Rinpoche wore his realization and learning with such simplicity and ease. I sometimes felt that his outward appearance was so subtle and understated that it would have been easy for a newcomer to miss who he really was. Once in 1976 I traveled with him from France to the United States. I shall never forget that flight for as long as I live. Dudjom Rinpoche was always very humble, but now and then he would say something that betrayed what an incredible master he was. At one point I was sitting next to him and he was gazing out the window at the Atlantic Ocean when he said quietly,

'May all those I fly over, all the beings living in the ocean down below be blessed.' I could feel that there was simply no question: He actually did possess the power to bless and relieve the suffering of countless living beings. And beyond any shadow of doubt, there and then, they were receiving his blessings. In that moment I realized what a great master he was—and not just a master, but a Buddha.

Even now, thirty years or so since he left this world, Dudjom Rinpoche's greatness still continues to dawn on me, day after day. The gratitude I feel toward him is boundless, and not a day goes by when I do not think of his words:

*Purifying karmic delusion, the heart's darkness,
The sun's radiant light continuously arises;
Such fortune is the lamas' inexpressible kindness:
Lama of unrepayable kindness, I hold you in my heart.*

Both Literal and Figurative: Guru Rinpoche Here and Now:

In the tradition of Guhyamantra, the Sacred Word, Guru Rinpoche reveals himself in uncountable guises to give people vision of the Great Perfection. Those forms of his, or emanations, are tulkus; not the tulkus of popular belief who manifest in a lineal series of mundane political incarnations, but tulku-buddhas who transcend space-time in the now. In Tibet, the principal form of Guru Rinpoche was Padmasambhava, Pema Jungné, the Lotus-Born Guru, acknowledged by all as Tibet's Great Guru. Whereas the legends of Padmasambhava in this book are rooted in the life of an historical character from the Land of Orgyen, they are better understood in terms of myth and archetype that have universal and eternal significance. We can appreciate this lama, Padmasambhava, as a founder of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism who lived in the 8th century, but of far greater import is his presence here and now as the pristine awareness of whatever arises in mind. To say that Guru Rinpoche manifests in many forms is to assert that Padmasambhava has many names and each name can be identified as an archetype as real and valid in the 21st century as it was in the eighth. Some of these universal existential modes are described in this introduction.

The Guru's Lotus Birth in the Here and Now

The primary myth of Padmasambhava is the story of his lotus birth. He is born miraculously in the middle of a lake in the pollen heart of a lotus flower. He is born buddha; he lives in a buddhfield; he transcends space-time in or as nondual mind. Although miraculously born in a lotus, his life appears not so different from our own because from the moment of his birth he demonstrates the phases of the commonplace life of an aspirant to buddha. His exemplary life of tantric apprenticeship adduces the legend of the ascetic buddhist sadhu. His life as a celibate buddhist monk engaged in soliciting instruction from his teachers, listening, ruminating and meditating, provides a blueprint for every aspiring pandita. His practice of sexual magic amongst Indian and Tibetan women generates the myth of the gender hero. His part in the drama of transmission of the buddha-dharma to Tibet makes him the tantric missionary; his propitiation of the gods and demons and subjection of the arrogant spirits of Tibet gave him the title, the 'great exorcist'. Finally and most auspiciously, he became the Guru-Lama, the tantric magician and preceptor *par excellence*, the master of psycho-experimental transmutation, bestower of the oral

transmission and revealer of the literary treasures (*terton*, treasure-finder) wherever the Dzogchen teaching in its various forms may be found.

The lotus birth that gives him his name—'Padmasambhava' in Sanskrit and 'Pema Jungné' in Tibetan—is the principal mythic element of his reality. Free of the womb and the birth canal, neither egg-born nor moisture-born, his lotus birth is classified as a miraculous birth, the fourth of the four possible modes of entry into this world. A lotus symbolizes life's great joy and unconditional compassion. It also represents the vast spaciousness of reality (*dharmadhatu*), a symbol of the *bhaga*, the cosmic *yonis*. Just as a lotus has its roots in the slime at the bottom of the pond and stretches up through clear water to bloom as if magically—rootlessly—upon the surface of the water, so the Lotus Born Guru is conceived in the human lust, hatred and stupidity that recognized in its essential nature is pristine awareness, clarity and compassion.

In the Dzogchen perspective, this birth occurs in the matrix of the here and now, transcending space-time. The child that is born is a prepubescent eight-year old, or a fourteen or sixteen-year old, whose genitals are fully mature but whose mind is still innocent. Like all experience in the matrix of the here and now, the child is a being of light experienced as light. He is a representation or symbol of the Great Perfection and he demonstrates how the natural state of reality is realized spontaneously without effort or practice. He spends his life showing how different modes of being, all equally suffused by the same pristine awareness, can bring others to recognition of the ultimate nature of mind.

When life is false or barren, we may strike out into the murk of an unknown ocean until an island of gold appears. This island-mandala is guarded at its center by a dakini-woman. With humble respect, we request the wishfulfilling gem, which is instantaneously granted, and through immaculate union the pure nature of mind—the true guru—is incarnate. Such a scenario implies total selfless receptivity on the part of the supplicant and unlimited, unconditional, generosity on the part of the angel. The relationship of such a petitioner and benefactor may be described figuratively in the worldly terms of male-female sexual interaction, where the wish-fulfilling gem is sexual consummation and a newborn child is fruition. The nondual experience may be delineated figuratively by the yab-yum union of male and female buddha, in which a single unitary totality, a zero-dimensional vision, is the existential reality. The newborn child, or the mystical experience, represents the lotus-born guru, or the nature of mind.

Lotus-birth may be initiatory experience, but there is no evidence that Tibetans used mind-altering substances to attain that lotus-birth. On the contrary, lotus-birth occurs in a synchronicous moment, a spontaneous epiphany in a moment of desireless nonaction. That timeless moment is inherently free of all causes and conditions whatsoever. Can desirelessness be attained through desire? Nonaction implies total openness, a nonintrusive, noninterfering,

receptivity to whatever occurs. Nonetheless, if the moment of synchronicity arises under the influence of a powerful entheogen, the initiatory experience is likely to be heightened.

In Dzogchen atiyoga parlance, lotus-birth may be synonymous with total recognition of the nature of mind. Intimation of the nature of mind, which is the first of Garab Dorje's three incisive precepts, is, surely, intimation of lotus-birth. Lotus-birth is of course nondual experience.

Guru as the Adolescent Prince

The lotus-born adolescent grew up in a conventional family of wealthy upper-class parents demonstrating the present awareness of a prince. He is fawned upon by his mother, his sisters and the women of their circle, indulged by his father, brothers and family retainers, and provided with his every desire. He is educated in both the arts and sciences, but his principal training is in sport and the art of war. His birth and wealth give him unlimited sexual access and freedom, and *droit de seigneur* in his father's harem and fiefdom. He marries the scion of a respectable family, however, and begets progeny.

That very tradition of birth and privilege has as its downside an inability to fulfill its altruistic goals and a rigidity that inhibits the scope of social expression. Caught in that society, the prince feels hemmed in and frustrated. The political side of his society demonstrates an egregious sleaziness that touches everyone in it, and its hypocrisy and falseness leap out at him. 'Politics is the work of the devil'. Hankering after freedom from this rigid social milieu, he rejects it *in toto* and seeks a way out. He achieves freedom by stepping outside the law. His lawlessness and his eventual condemnation, conviction and sentence provide him with the milieu that he needs to realize the nature of his mind and to express it altruistically. Expiating his crimes, he atones for the nescient and malignant side of humankind. Just as authentic tragedy—as opposed to pathos—requires a long fall from a high place, so the prince's resolution of a young man's angst entails abandonment of vast resources and potential pleasure, so that the very deep change in circumstance is enough to catalyze a turning around in the seat of consciousness.

It may be true that a fall from godly heights produces the most creative suffering, and, therefore, scions of the upper castes are more likely to gain lotus-birth, but those heights may also be metaphorical heights of conceit and hubris. Such a mind-state is not a monopoly of any particular social strata or group. The demographics of the eighty-four mahasiddhas show no bias towards any one social class.

Unlike Sakyamuni Gautama, who crept out of his father's palace at night into self-exile, Padmasambhava, convicted of jealousy and anger that manifested finally in the act of murder, was banished, forced into exile. But, as the legend would have it, he thus provided the means whereby he could be expelled from

his homeland. Like Sakyamuni, he was separated from his family and friends, from everything that was familiar, and from the history and environment that had conditioned his body-mind to unconscious habits and subliminal karmas. Like many of the eighty-four mahasiddhas, born and bred in a privileged class, he renounced his past, and wandered as a sadhu to far distant countries. In the time-honored ritual of the East, or in the impulsive adventurism of the West, in obedience to the vital principles of renunciation and deculturation, he fulfilled Tilopa's first instruction to Naropa: 'Leave your family, friends and homeland and travel to a foreign country and in an alien land work out your own salvation with diligence.'

The Guru's Apprenticeship: Tantric 'Terrorist'

The young sadhu, libidinous and fearless, with impunity explores the natural *maya* of samsara within the frame of tantra. The exiled prince takes tantric initiation and empowerment and travels outside the social purview, outside social convention. With the nature of mind—the natural state of being—as an infallible touchstone, living outside secular law, he takes the ultimate value of the Guru as his guide. On the quest for the wish-fulfilling gem—for the philosopher's stone, for the holy grail—he travels a path at a tangent to the mainline of conventional morality. This sadhu-yogin's practice is called *tanagana*, which is twilight language—tantric code—for fornication and killing, or in tantric euphemism 'sexual-union and deliverance'. In the legend of Padmasambhava in the guise of Rakshasa Shantarakshita, *tanagana* is depicted literally as 'raping and slaughter'. In the impetuosity and inexperience of youth, *tanagana* may, at least initially, even in the *dharmayuga* of Padmasambhava's era, be interpreted literally. The mountain culture was rougher than that of the plains. The *tanagana* practice was a necessary initiatory stage in the maturation of a tantric sadhu, a preliminary, preparatory yoga in the cult of Padmasambhava. Perhaps this has a parallel in the vision-quest of pre-Colombian North America.

As an essential part of the tantric SAMAYA made at the time of initiation and empowerment, the commitment to take life may be considered a part of a youth's initiation into manhood. Whether such activity is understood literally or figuratively, 'killing' is seen as providing liberation from the torment of the victim's samsaric prison. Literally, for example, when a bandit or killer is delivered from his samsaric prison in order that the life of his potential victim should be saved, then the bodhisattva assassin of the killer fulfills his vow and the killer is himself released from his tortuous karma and transported to a buddhafield. In this tantric context, only positive karma can result from the assassination of incarnate evil. But the bodhisattva assassin must himself have the power of awareness that allows his victim to escape a bad rebirth. When the terms 'deliverance', 'release' or 'killing' are understood figuratively, the victims are karmic energy flows or afflictive emotions—desire, anger and fear (*kleśhas*)—and the method of their release, for example, is breath control, and

again, of course, only benefit can result for sentient beings. In Dzogchen, the victims are mental constructs and projections, dualisms spontaneously recognized as unity in the awareness of pure presence.

Likewise, if other beings are to be fully served, the tantric yogin is licensed to practice theft (taking what is not given), sexual indulgence, lying, and cursing and swearing. Figuratively, whoever then possesses the sexual essence of his consort, or the primal awareness of pure pleasure, has taken what is not given. 'Sexual indulgence' is accomplishment of the immutable pleasure of 'orgasm' attendant upon the union of intrinsic awareness and its sensory field, which is mahamudra. Further, 'to lie', for example, is to assume that samsara has concrete existence—while knowing full well that it is effervescent insubstantial illusion—in order that sentient beings are released from their delusory reifications. Finally, 'to curse and swear' is to verbalize the meaning of profound symbols, regardless of secrecy, knowing that words are a wholly inadequate medium of revelation.

Today, in deference to a residue of puritanical cultural mores, tanagana activity is concealed from puritans and purists, from church-ladies and nontantric feminists, whose nature it is to protest like an overprotective mother warning her offspring of the hazards of the road. The front of strictly conventional behavior shown by the young Nyingma tulkus in contemporary Tibetan exile society in Dharamsala, for instance is in response to this pervasive attitude. When young tulkus travel to the West, they assume a lifestyle very similar to a christian priest under the eye of his church-ladies. This assumed behavior is in line with pre-Chinese, theocratic Tibet, where the ascetic tantric lifestyle had become largely concealed under monastic pretension and ritualized in practices of both white and black magic. Monks, of course, deny the validity of anything but a figurative interpretation of *tanagana*.

A diluted exoteric version of tanagana can be seen in the activity of the young Drukpa Kunley, the divine madman. Taking the mickey out of monks bound by religious vows, playing practical jokes on staid lamas, fighting with hollow demons, playing with the village girls and getting nuns pregnant, is a later, less severe and intense, more digestible and socially acceptable form of tanagana behavior. Furthermore, the itinerant ngakpa sadhus of Old Tibet provide evidence of a lifestyle that Padmasambhava of Orgyen would recognize.

Employing the rubric of tanagana, the *Zanglingma* describes how Padmasambhava as Rakshasa Shantarakshita rapes and kills his way across a country ruled by a demonic king, thus liberating the people from otherwise inescapably miserable rebirths. Hunted by the king and his police force, he escapes an ever-tightening net of vengeance and as a fugitive slips away to continue his demonstration of perfected tanagana.

There is no evidence that in his tanagana guise Padmasambhava smoked ganja (weed) or charas (hashish), but then there is no evidence either that he ate chili

peppers, garlic or onions—all substances forbidden by Brahmin convention but consumed by the lower castes and sadhus. The Nath yogins (Gorakhnathis), who are the successors to buddhist sadhu lineages in India, however, are renowned for their sadhana of intoxication. Cannabis could be considered one of the five substances of tantric SAMAYA in which the tantric yogin must indulge. There is also no evidence that Padmasambhava ingested dhatura (thorn apple, jimson weed), another psychedelic substance employed by the Nath sadhus, which in buddhist tantric scriptures is adduced as a metaphor for an absolute certainty of the reality of an illusory condition.

Some hagiographers have insinuated that Padmasambhava's period of running with the rakshasas was a demonstration of unfulfilled aspiration or simply egregious error, both of which constitute a deviation from the pathless path. Yet Padmasambhava was lotus-born and every action of body, speech and mind is ineluctably, spontaneously, complete and perfect in itself and, therefore, of inevitable benefit to all sentient beings. As a rakshasa, he was demonstrating the immaculate path of apprenticeship and the immaculate path of social deviance.

The language of the Guru's practice of 'deliverance'—an extraordinarily violent technique of liberation of the damned, performed for both immediate and long-term benefit—is an expression of tantric twilight language, in which both literal and analogical interpretations are possible.

The Guru as Tantric Buddhist Sadhu: Sexual Yoga

In Zahor, the tantric buddhist sadhu gets into trouble with the local rajah for seducing his virginal daughter and eloping with her. In that culture, in that era, the rajah would not have been tainted by puritanical morality, just upset that a foreign sadhu had laid hands on his daughter and decreased her value in the marriage market. In the event, caught by the rajah's retainers and sentenced to be burnt alive with his lover, the yogin demonstrates the purity of his sexual passion and his bodhisattvic motivation. After three days of immolation, in the midst of a dying pyre in the middle of a lake, he is discovered sitting in a samadhi of yab-yum union with his lover.

To the rajah and his people this demonstrated the tantric precept of total detachment in the heat of burning passion; to us, it may demonstrate that, contrary to christian belief, sexual passion is not inimical to salvation or liberation, but on the contrary, sexual desire can provide a gateway into nondual awareness and pure presence. In Zahor, the yogin was called Tsokye Dorje, Padma Vajra, the Lotus-Born Vajra, with sexual symbols (padma and vajra) at one evoking the immaculate flower that grows out of the slime of a lake bottom and symbolizing immutable awareness in the face of all samsaric circumstances. The story of Padmasambhava's return to the city of his consort Mandarava's birth also represents the myth of the scorned bodhisattva-yogin returning to show his pristine innocence to redeem his former oppressors.

The original location of Zahor is uncertain, probably far to the west, close to Orgyen, but for the benefit of pilgrims requiring easy access the power place it has been transposed to Rewalsar near Mandi, at the top of the Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh in India. This location is presently renowned as Tsopema (Lotus Lake) in Tibetan, a site that provides an ideal ambience for contemplation and the yoga of union.

In Orgyen, where his reputation as a crazy killer is still lingering, the Guru demonstrates again an essential detachment from the fire of emotional passion—a fire that burns three times as intensely as that of beings caught in *samsara*—and his attainment of buddha is recognized by the people. In Orgyen, he is renamed Totrentse, Skull Necklace Creativity, where a garland of skulls indicates his ability to string every moment of experience—whatever the content—upon the thread of present awareness and spaciousness. This represents a secret and full understanding of the Dakini by the Guru.

It is notable that in these legends of Padmasambhava's gender relationships, although bound in teacher-student commitment, a clear sense of equality shines through. This sense of basic sameness is absent in the descriptions of sexual commerce between caste-infected Indians of the plains. The sexual relationships depicted in the *apabhramsa doha* songs of the mahamudra tradition, for instance, describe low-caste dakini-yoginis treated by the high-caste yogin as chattels with whom sexual yoga may be practiced exclusive of the niceties of human sentiment, let alone of awareness of sameness in the here and now. There is a sense in which the partners in the yoga of union 'use' each other, the one—or maybe both—who knows the yogic purpose of intercourse and who is aware of the nondual joy that arises, 'employs' the other's body. But in this respect the dakini has potential equal to that of the guru, and like Yeshe Tsogyel, who took a Newar boy in Bhaktapur for her practice-mudra, she can 'employ' a male consort. In the event of the yogini feeling herself alienated and 'used', a mere appendage of the yogin, it must be emphasized that Yeshe Tsogyel as Dakini-Guru represents the nondual totality, in which the *daka*, the male gender-hero, is a projection intended for his own illumination. Thus, the dakini is the female gender hero, the *daki*. In this context, it should be noted that in the *Zanglingma* the source of Indrabhuti's wishfulfilling gem was the *nagini* Dzemo ('Beauty'). The *nagas* are 'subterranean' beings, every *nagini* a daughter of the earth-mother.

The sexual yoga of the tantric approach entails recognizing and becoming intimately familiar with subtle energy (*lung, prana*) and its flows. First, during foreplay, the energy is drawn out of the capillary channels (*rtsa, nadi*), concentrated in the upper chakras and withdrawn through the left and right channels (*ro ma* and *kyang ma*) to the base chakra. Retained in the base chakra during intercourse, at mutual climax it is withdrawn up the central channel (*uma, avadhuti*) to the thousand-petalled-lotus crown chakra and then dispersed through the subsidiary channels to saturate the entire psycho-organism as bliss

and awareness (*bindu*, *thig-le*). In Dzogchen, in the timeless now, since the unitary dispensation is known as unbroken and unbreakable, this temporal process is imperceptible.

The Gurn as Siddha Yogin in the Cremation Ground

The cremation ground is the place of penitential purification. Crows and vultures, emissaries of Mahakala, the Great Black buddha-protector; vicious canines, the vehicles of Bhairava, the ferocious energetic side of Shiva Mahadev; and rodents, the vehicles of Ganapati, the lord of beats, dancers and musicians, all devour the scraps of cadavers remaining after the pyre has consumed the corpses. Beggars, lepers, thieves, addicts, and petty criminals of all kinds, lurk in the shadows with outcaste whores and discarded widows, witnessing the mortal coil burnt upon magnificent funeral pyres.

In these cremation grounds, the corpses of sensory and mental perception are devoured. The lingering hosts of undigested experience and the reified spirits of repressed trauma are exorcised. The flames of the cremation fires burn away the fleshly impurities of embodiment, leaving the bare bones of emptiness remaining. Mean and wrathful dakini-spirits, barely relinquishing lustful clinging, must be pacified and released. The dakinis of psychotropic substances aid and abet the stripping of existence to its utter nakedness, allowing not a jot of conventional or subliminal psychological defensiveness. The cremation grounds, then, are places of initiatory experience.

Padmasambhava is said to have lived in all of the eight great cremation grounds of the subcontinent, thereby establishing their location and recognizing and appreciating their sanctity. Of those eight, Siwaitsé (Sitavan), Cool Garden, in the vicinity of Bodhgaya, and Sosaling (location uncertain), are the most renowned in Tibet. Numerologically, the eightfold reckoning may enumerate the eight forms of consciousness (the five outer sensory and the three inner, mental, consciousnesses). But in the context of Nyingma mahayoga sadhana the eightfold enumeration refers to the Drubpa Kapje, the eight buddha-deities representing the eight aspects of totality: the enlightened body, speech, mind, quality, action, *mamo* of desire, mundane devotion and malefic mantra.

The actual cremation grounds are special locations—power places—for the practice of tantric meditation. However, such meditation may arise spontaneously in a mind that has become detached from form and content and focuses on its nature—its emptiness. The ‘tantric-yogin’s extraordinary lifestyle’ (*tulzhuk*) is the dynamic corollary of that mind change, which can be formularized as the ‘four mind changes’ of the Vajrayana tantric preliminaries. Certainly it is demonstrated by both the hermits (*gomchens*) and the wandering tantrikas (*ngakpas*) of Old Tibet, but also it is seen—and perhaps more strikingly seen—in the practice of some Hindu ascetic sadhu traditions. Such sadhu traditions have maintained their integrity even after the Sunni Muslims, the christian missionaries, and finally the middle-class babus have devastated their

lifestyle with their importunate puritanism. Vestiges of it can still be seen amongst the Kahnphata (Gorakhnathi) yogins of northern India, who in the heyday of Indian tantra, when there was little distinction between buddhist-tantric and *shaiva-shakta* praxis, were buddhist tantrikas. This ascetic *sadhana* was—and is—a strict mind-yoga practice lived with or without physical discipline as *tapasya*, self-abnegation, outside the conventional religious and social frame. The Naths exemplify the more disciplined sadhu lifestyle, whereas the *agbhor*i sadhus, for example, intent upon the one taste of all experience, show less external discipline. Another important distinction: whereas in Hindu liturgies altruism is barely explicit, the bodhisattva ethic of selfless service is an outstanding feature. in tantric buddhist liturgy.

The ascetic tantric lifestyle was established long before the Muslims invaded India, long before Vajrayana Buddhism became a venerable tradition. The ascetic lifestyle of the Indian subcontinent is said to have been practiced originally by the *kapalikas*, ‘skullcup-wallahs’. Alone, outcaste, taking refuge in cremation grounds, experiencing the human condition in its starkest manifestations, confronting the darkest corners of the mind to expiate human iniquity, the kapalika yogin purified his own karma and that of others, and transcending it realized the acausal essential nature of mind. This *kapalika* *sadhana* is said to have evolved from the lifestyle of Brahmins who according to the laws of Manu when convicted of high-caste murder were sentenced to carry the skull of their victim as a begging bowl for the stipulated period of their sentence, wandering outcaste and naked.

The Guru in the Center of a Dakini Circle

In the days of degeneracy, at the end of the kaliyuga, in both east and west, the sublime term ‘dakini’ tends to be used interchangeably with ‘an available sexual partner’. Such a definition puts the cart before the horse. Sexual freedom, or rather the understanding and application of sex as a compassionate skillful-means, is the product of the realization of the feminine principle as buddha. That realization was demonstrated by Khandro Yeshe Tsogyel as she initiated her rapists in the very act of copulation with her. Understanding sensory stimuli as dakini, the knower, the awareness of sensory perception, becomes the guru. In this way we come to the image of the guru (male or female) at the center of a circle of dakinis.

First, then, the Dakini is the one, the totality, the dharmakaya. Then she is five, the five mudras (or sensory objects or fields) of the five senses. Finally, she is many, multiplicity, women as dakinis, all emanations of Dharmakaya Kuntuzangmo.

The dakini as the totality is inherent in the singular image of Kuntuzangpo; then in yabyum union, as Kuntuzangmo, she is spaciousness to Kuntuzangpo present awareness: that is the dakini in dharmakaya representation. In the sambhogakaya, in the basic buddha-mandala of spaciousness, the dakini

principle is realized in the five buddha-families primarily as the five rainbow colors and secondarily as the five elements, the five sense objects, and so on. In this context, in the Dzogchen Maha Ati perspective, in Guru Rinpoche's mind, the dakinis are components of enlightened sensory perception. Such perception must be denominated 'nondual perception', and thus in our mystical identity in the here and now, in the Dzogchen view, we all are dakinis. In the sambhogakaya we actually 'see' five-fold elemental appearances in five-colored lightform, a constantly changing strobe-like phantasmagoria of light and sound, which may be called 'the dance of the dakinis'.

Then in the nirmanakaya, the dakini is the dharmakaya female principle of buddha embodied in every woman and in every man. This female principle is iconographically depicted as Yeshe Tsogyel, Padmasambhava's Tibetan consort, in her stand-alone form. As Guru Rinpoche's Dakini, however, she is the one totality Dakini, the indivisible unity of the three kayas. This awareness of the now is symbolized by Padmasambhava's khatvanga, held in the crook of his arm, or represented by his consort in sexual union, signifying physical, energetical and mental identity. From Khandro Yeshe Tsogyel's point of view, she is the embodiment of the colored lightforms of empty spaciousness and she clasps her consort, Padma Jungné, as the inseparable unitary field of awareness. Symbolically, his consorts are innumerable. The three aspects of the dakini are inseparable—she is always one.

In the blighted confusion of samsara, the tantric yogin or yogini will meet the dakini in a cremation ground, or in a charnel ground, as a seemingly external entity. The female principle appears alienated as untamed passionate energy and appears in ferocious forms, perhaps sometimes even as a demonized woman. Along with the mahakala guardians and feral animals, the dakinis appear dangerously aggressive with powers of affliction of body and mind, and the yogin labors under the paranoid delusion that they are attempting—and succeeding—to manipulate and control him. The yogin's business is to pacify them with his vajra-eye, to befriend them and recognize them as allies. Visualizing those fierce and hostile female masks as aspects of mind's nature, he overcomes them, mollifying them, so that they may bestow the blessing and empowerment of bliss and wisdom.

In a more general sense, wrathful dakinis may represent the insight obtained through an extraordinary trauma, specific energetic initiatory experience, or an epiphany occurring in a dynamic situation. When a yogin is engaged in 'subduing a dakini', a formal teaching situation involving a yogini may be implied, but the breakthrough into the experiential SAMAYA of yogin-yogini union, wherein sameness is consciously shared in dharma-reality, what is subjected is the yogin's mind. The 'cremation ground' is the intrusive sometimes hostile mental environment in which such yoga is cultivated. The beings of this subjective plane of existence may be malignant or damned and

the skillful means required to convert them may sometimes appear to be dynamic or forceful.

Subsequent to his pacification of the dakini and his initiation by her, it is the yoga of union with her that is stressed in Padmasambhava's serial relationships. In the Zanglingma, Mandarava, his main Indian consort, Sakyadevi his Nepali consort and Yeshe Tsogyel, his foremost Tibetan consort, are presented as his dakini mudras.

In the nonduality of Guru Rinpoche, the dakini necessarily can have no separate identity. Then, from the yogin's point of view, in order to provide the means of realization-recognition, total awareness of the here and now and the mutual dependence of guru-dakini union, the female nature expresses itself as a manifest consort. She becomes the vast spaciousness of the dharmadhatu and he retains the masculine principle that is self-existent awareness. From the yogini's perspective, in order to provide the means of realization-recognition, the masculine nature expresses itself as infinitely pliable intrinsic awareness.

Padmasambhava's feminine nature becomes manifest when he takes a consort to practice a specific tantric meditation, like the sadhana of long life, wherein Mandarava becomes the key to his longevity. The purity of passion—both his and hers—is the motif treated in the legend of Padmasambhava's return to Mandarava's homeland of Zahor and then later to his own homeland of Orgyen. The precept treated is that—burning three times as hot in the yogin as in the hedonist—the samadhi of ultimate detachment is achieved in the fire of passion; (William Blake said something like that.) Guru Rinpoche as gender hero demonstrates that sex—in every culture—is cognitively inalienable and in that awareness all sexual doubt and guilt is resolved.

Demonstration of the purity of passion reintegrates the tantric yogin into the society that rejects him. Tantric practice may encompass every kind of human activity, and due to the opprobrium that conventional, uninitiated, society projects upon tantric yogins, tantrikas were an outcaste, secret society in India. Today, when the ambience of Western culture begins to approach that of the land of the dakinis, that exorciation may still be felt in some societies, but the need for hermetic secrecy has gone.

The land of the dakinis is the Land of Orgyen. Orgyen may originally have had a geographical location, but today it is to be recognized by its preponderant dakini demographic. Conversely, wherever the dakinis are to be found is the Land of Orgyen. Padmasambhava's birthplace was Orgyen, the land of the dakinis. (see *Guru Rinpoche Here and Now* 'Historical Space', p. 280).

Finally, the dakinis carried Padmasambhava away at the end of his sojourn in Tibet, or at his passing. Riding on a sunbeam, the dakinis escort him. His body and his entire reality is lightform. Matter has dissolved into five-colored rainbow light. He is enshrined in the dakini pureland. No self remains.

The Guru as Buddhist Monk

An adjunct—rather than an alternative—to the lifestyle of a tantric yogin is monkish renunciation and supplication. His experience as a tantric yogin opens up a longing in him for fulfillment and completion. If tanagana is like recognition of samsara and nirvana—the human condition—for exactly what it is, then it has provided an idea of what is ultimately possible in this bardo of existence and becoming. Certainly the knowledge of the wheel of life and of the buddha-demon who holds it in his maw and claw is gained on the high plateau of the Himalayas, in the human jungles and cremation grounds of India, on the beaches of Goa, Ibiza and Southern California, and in the ghettos and barrios of post-industrial cities. Padmasambhava was not monk-like in nature, but in order to gain access to the transmission of atiyoga, to the liturgies of mahayoga and the secrets of the inner tantras, he took ordination and demonstrated the discipline associated with the various levels of ordination and ritual initiation. To the extent that his tanagana had been deep and broad, he encountered the greatest teachers of his day and received whatever he asked for and whatever he needed. In the process, Padmasambhava, who had been raised a sportsman and warrior, who had begged his way across India on the road, became a buddhist pandita capable of reducing any argumentative theist to a state of vast spaciousness.

The renunciate tantric lifestyle and the cremation ground come first because samsara and nirvana are purified thereby, and they both become well defined. Dissatisfaction, its causes and resolution, have become matters of concern if not obsession. Lust and anger have been identified within and sublimated. The *mamo* dakinis and other nonhumans have been mollified. Now the yogin or yogini is prepared for the hermitage and the role of the supplicant acolyte who seeks initiation and meditation instruction on progressive maturation and eventual fruition. Traditionally, monastic ordination, which implies some degree of physical and moral discipline, is considered the best means to attain this end. Padmasambhava took full bhikshu ordination, but, again, since he is the omniscient buddha incarnate he has no need for ordination, but rather in order to show others how to act, and in order to induce faith in them, he goes through the motions.

It is pertinent to question whether Padmasambhava as a monk demonstrated any perfect homosexual role. Insofar as buddhist monastic shelters were as likely to harbor men inclined to love men, or women attracted to women, as christian institutions, and, according to folklore, monasteries and convents have always attracted homosexuals, surely Padmasambhava would have an existential paradigm to offer to gays. In response to an evident absence of such a teaching in the Tibetan tradition, firstly, variant sexual preference does not imply any radical distinction in existential dynamics or in any way undermine the Dzogchen view. The precepts remain the same for every embodiment of variation on the sexual theme. Secondly, whatever the degree of sexual drive,

hetero-sexual or homo-sexual, the nuts and bolts of buddhist monastic discipline provide relevant guidelines. Thirdly, in the Dzogchen Breakthrough (*trekcho*) view, a gay disposition requires no exceptional treatment. In the Way of the Sacred Word, all sexual expression—including its most extreme and unconventional manifestations—is subsumed within the six realms of the wheel of life and is treated identically. There is no need for a specifically gay icon here—the masks of Guru Rinpoche are innumerable and all inclusive.

There is no reason to disparage monastic institutions, just as there is no reason to deride priests, but currently both institution and profession are out of fashion. Monasteries look like spiritual kindergartens, establishing elementary existential principles that seem to be self-evident to people whose dualistic conditioning has been ameliorated. Like walled gardens keeping the weather at bay, while the more densely inhabited forest or jungle outside remains untamed, the monastery harbors a lifestyle that appears to be narrow and limited in scope, lacking an altruistic imperative. As in the monasteries of medieval Europe, buddhist monasteries are the refuge of bona fide mystics, but also of ambitious contenders without political or social connections, homosexual predators, social casualties, simpletons and retards. Today, the lifestyle of the tantric yogin, although incommensurate with the Dzogchen rikzin fully integrated into mainstream society, appears more effective and more appropriate, whether in the guise of urban yogi, or semi-hermetic country cousin.

The Gurn as Mahayoga Ritualist

In Tibet, the buddhist monk (*gelong, bhikshu*) could also be a tantric adept, although the tantric adept was not necessarily a bhikshu. Whatever the ordination, the aspiring adept on the graduated path of the Sacred Word would progress from the preliminaries (*ngondro*: usually the five practices of ‘the hundred thousands’) to the creative stage of visualization and recitation, which constitute the essential practices of mahayoga.

First in the cremation grounds as a tantric yogin and then in the hermitages as a supplicant monk, Padmasambhava demonstrates the conventional procedures for allowing spiritual growth and maturity. Practice in the rituals of the outer *yoga-tantra* form his preliminary training. Purification of the body and attention to the phenomenal realm prepare him for the principal initiation into mahayoga, which is Padmasambhava’s main path of meditation practice. His initiation from the bhikshuni Kungamo is described in erotic terms. This nun is also the supreme Awareness Dakini, Lekyi Wangmo, the initiatrix, abiding in the sambhogakaya realm of the rikzin knowledge-holders (*vidyadharas*), whose transmission is affected through symbolic indications. Through this initiation, Padmasambhava is fully empowered to receive instruction from his primary lineal teachers, the eight Indian rikzin, who bestow the instruction of the eight transmissions of the eight Kapje Herukas of mahayoga.

Padmasambhava received Jampel Ku, the Manjushri cycle (Manjushrikaya) from Manjushrimitra; Yangdak Tuk (Vajra Heruka), the Immaculate Heart, from HUNGkara; Dorje Phurba (Vajra Kilaya), the Vajra-Dagger, from Prabhahasti; Pema Sung (Padmavak), Lotus Speech, from Nagarjuna; Dutsi Yonten (Amritakundali), Ambrosial Quality, from Mahavajra; *Mamo* Botong, Propitiation of the Cursing *Mamo* Goddesses, from Danasamskrita; Jikten Choto, Propitiation of the Guardians, from Rambuguhya Devachandra; and Drakngak Mopa, Fierce Mantra and Curse, from Shantigarbha. He also received instruction on Mahamaya, the Magnificent Illusion, from Buddhaguhya and, finally, Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, from Shri Singha.

The rubric of mahayoga is saturated with that kind of technical designation, to be repeated in the description of mahayoga transmission in Tibet. Once through the labyrinth of names and categories, what this mahayoga boils down to is a meditation ritual evoking the internal dimension of the eight aspects of the basic reality of being: the physical, energetical, mental, qualitative, and active aspects, together with dakini-propitiatory, theistic-devotional and mantra-malefic functions. These aspects may or may not appear to the adept as seemingly wrathful visionary phantoms called Herukas, but they are 'felt' as compassion or 'seen' as rainbow light. The buddha-archetype that is an amalgamation of these eight (Chemchok Heruka), or incorporates their qualities (Dorje Phurba), is the yidam, which is a wrathful buddha-deity, the predominant archetype that symbolizes the totality of nondual experience.

The perils of reification and fixed identity in mahayoga practice are obvious. Instead of a doorway into the constantly changing ineffable reality of Dzogchen, the practice of visualization and recitation can so easily become a conditioned world of make-believe, and the conventional lifestyle of a mahayoga yogin is assimilated as personal identity. Life becomes a routine of spiritually satisfying sophisticated forms of ritual meditation performed alone or communally. In the light of the Maha Ati Dzogchen view, this mahayoga is a gentle reminder of the overarching awareness of the now, simplicity itself, available freely in the vast scope of sensory experience. Herein, the implication is that the Dzogchen view and initiatory experience of the nature of mind have ineluctable primary significance and that only thereafter mahayoga serves as a clarification of the dynamic experiences of realization.

At the center of Padmasambhava's *sadhana*, his spiritual practice, is his perfect demonstration of the status of 'rikzin', or knowledge-holder, as 'he who lives as nondual present awareness (*rikpa*)'. In the formulation that appears in Nyangrel Nyima Wozer's terma-treasures, this rikzin accomplishment has two aspects. The first is the long-life rikzin and the second the rikzin of mahamudra. It would appear that Guru Pema has an obsession with mortal longevity until, in the *Zanglingma*, it becomes apparent that long-life implies a state of birthlessness and deathlessness. In other words 'longevity' is nondual present awareness in space-time that permits a long life as a secondary advantage. The

ultimate rikzin, the supreme mahamudra, on the other hand, has no space-time referent and is equivalent to the buddha Sakyamuni's enlightenment, which Padmasambhava attained, according to local lore, in the Gorakhnath Cave at Pharping in the Kathmandu Valley. Both long-life and supreme mahamudra rikzin practices are described in terms of mahayoga ritual. But insofar as Guru Pema took an Indian girl as his mudra for the long-life practice and a Newar girl as his *mudra* for the supreme mahamudra rikzin yoga, it would appear that these practices belong more to anuyoga. Regardless of such categorization, it is made manifestly evident that a long life is attained best with the assistance of a dakini. The nature of the sexual union of guru and dakini thus revealed is likened to the intense heat of passion burning within a cool lake. Note that within the Dzogchen context, mahamudra is a subordinate factor.

The Guru as Teacher and Missionary

The adolescent Padmasambhava received a standard secular education at home; as a young man his principal learning experience, however, was on the road, in the Kerouacian sense. Yet, at Samye in Tibet we find him translating Dzogchen texts along with the greatest of Indian scholars of the day. Here, Padmasambhava is demonstrating Guru Rinpoche as pandita—scholar and teacher. Although in Bodhgaya, defeating the theists, and in Tibet, exorcising the local deities of the mountains and valleys, he was performing the work of teacher primarily through magical means, his original teaching function in India was in the guise of a missionary, or a bridge-builder, transmitting Vajrayana and Dzogchen from one culture to another. His transmission of the tantric doctrine from Orgyen to Tibet was perhaps more crucial than Bodhidharma's transmission of the Mahayana from India to China, and of equal significance to his tulkus' and tertons' transmission of doctrine from Tibet to the various Vajrayana centers of the entire world during the past fifty years.

Amongst those tulkus and tertons responsible for the transmission of Dzogchen to the West, the great lamas like Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse, and the younger vidyadhara lamas like Chogyam Trungpa and Chogyel Namkhai Norbu, are recognized formally as emanations of Guru Rinpoche; but Guru Rinpoche manifests in myriad forms, transcendental, human and nonhuman, not always predictable or recognizable, all of which may be crucial elements in the transmission. It was, incidentally, tulkus of Padmasambhava who said, 'When the iron bird flies, the buddha-dharma will reach the West' and 'At the end of the kaliyuga Dzogchen will flourish while Buddhism will decay.'

The activity of the divine madman, Drukpa Kunley, and his brother crazies (*nyombas*) and itinerant tantric sadhus (*ngakpas*), provide evidence of a lifestyle that Padmasambhava of Orgyen could recognize. But the façade of strictly conventional behavior shown by young Nyingma tulkus in contemporary exile society in Dharamsala, or even perhaps in Kathmandu, would certainly surprise

him. When those young tulkus travel to the West, they assume a lifestyle very similar to a christian priest under the eye of church-ladies; this is in line with theocratic Tibet before the Chinese invasion, where the ascetic tantric lifestyle had become largely concealed under monastic pretension and ritualized in practices of both white and black magic. Among the Dzogchen missionaries to the West the exceptions to this dumbing down of tantric practice are few: Chogyam Trungpa is the one outstanding exception, although other fearless Nyingma yogins like Chagdud Tulku and Lama Tharchin have sometimes let the cat out of the bag. The legend of Padmasambhava demonstrating the perfection of being a tantric sadhu evokes the necessary stage of life in which sex and survival are fully apprehended and indulged.

The Guru as Exorcist: Master of Gods, Demons and Spirits

The label 'exorcist' has a much broader meaning in shamanic Tibet than in western christian culture. The exorcist in the Roman Catholic Church seeks to liberate an 'evil spirit' from the bodymind of a possessed being; a Tibetan Buddhist exorcist subjugates and brings under his control all gods, demons and spirits wherever they may be found. Even the many Tibetans who conceive of Pema Jungné simply as an exorcist, conceive of him as an immensely powerful tantric magician. In the Dzogchen view, 'spirits' as conceived by dualists and materialists, are reifications of consensually existing metaphysical experiences of seemingly external, disembodied, living entities of different kinds. Such experiences, while existing only instantaneously in reality, may persist in the mind as memory. Due to an atavistic psychic process, such memories, particularly in the fearful and sacred places upon earth that may be termed power-places, are projected externally as autonomous 'spirit' entities. Their existence is reinforced by consensual communal conviction or belief. The exorcist's vital function for both himself and the community is to deconstruct that concept so that the energetic reality of 'spirits' is known and integrated into the totality vision. In the process those loose energies are brought under the yogin-exorcist's control.

In the ancient, universal, shamanism, particularly in Central Asia, the notion of the triple realm of heaven, earth and the subterranean realm was fundamental: gods (*lha*) and demons (*'dre*) inhabited heaven; men (*mi*) and the vast horde of spirits (*mi ma yin*) lived on earth; and the serpentine spirits (*klu, nagas*) lived below. This primeval worldview still permeates folk belief in Tibet and India and traces of it are still extant in the Western world.

The shamanic exorcist may be considered an illusionist, a juggler of dynamic phenomena, above, below and in between. The buddhist exorcist added the functions of pacification, enrichment, control and destruction to his facility for manipulation of energetic configurations. The tantric buddhist yogin is therefore a master of illusion, master of the heavens, the earth and the subterranean realms. Padmasambhava employed this faculty of awareness in

the cremation grounds when faced with malignant, unregenerate dakinis (*mamos*), and with the hosts of spirits that assailed him during the period of profound ego-loss. Nevertheless, his pre-eminence as an exorcist led to his invitation to Tibet and his exorcism of the wild gods and demons and untamed spirits of the land of the snows.

The subjection of unfettered Bon gods, demons and spirits and their assimilation into the tantric buddhist purview is perhaps the pre-eminent function of Padmasambhava in Tibet on the macrocosmic stage. For that he is recognized and worshipped as the Great Exorcist even by those Tibetans unfriendly to the Nyingma tradition. The legends of Padmasambhava in Tibet treat at length his subjection of particular gods and demons, in the process describing pre-buddhist shamanism and shamanic exorcism. The shamanic imagery of gods and demons understood as externalization of inner phenomena is assumed, however, and with that insight the buddhist view of it as a phenomenology of meditation is achieved, all of it, including images and concepts, originating out of the store-consciousness (the eighth consciousness in buddhist metapsychology).

The subjection of the major mountain gods of the Tibetan plateau is conventionally described in terms of the yogin's out-shining and dis-illusioning of entities that feel themselves possessed of an autonomous soul, a substantial essence. The tantric yogin, tertön and tulku, maintains Guru Rinpoche's subjection of those entities, now transformed into protecting deities or guardians, through recitation of their heart-mantra. The 'malefic mantra' is their sonic form; the heart mantra is their 'heart-essence'. A corollary of ego destruction is a vow (SAMAYA) to obey the spontaneous dictates of Guru Rinpoche, which is to say, we allow the compassionate spontaneity of mind's nature to control us. But perhaps it would be easier to express that function by saying that subjection of those gods and spirits is achieved by conversion of the men in whose minds they arise.

The Guru as manager of seemingly external gods, demons and spirits represents himself as free from all attachment to whatever inner or outer phenomena or numina arise in the mind. Insofar as such detachment is a function of natural release of objects of perception, it is a spontaneous function of the nondual mind, and Guru Pema is a tulku-buddha, the involuntary controller of the spiritual dimension, the Great Exorcist. This identity has deep ramifications for the meaning of Guru Lama, which is the overarching identity of Padmasambhava's emanations and inclusive of all others. The natural function of exorcist may be considered the most important act of the Guru Lama. The cult of Padmasambhava is the cult of Guru Rinpoche who is the buddha-lama, the spiritual magician who demands and receives absolute devotion from his students, and in return bestows upon them whatever they need in the way of blessings, initiation, authorization and instruction on the path. Finally, the buddha-lama bestows enlightenment itself.

In the conventional, institutionalized lineage, the guru or the lama is a master through whom information upon the nature of mind and methods of yoga and meditation are transmitted in space-time. But in the existential-lineage the guru is a master of psycho-experimental transformation who through pacification of the mind, enrichment of it, magnetizing and controlling it, and destroying its conditioned structures, cultivates psychic energy in a continuous process of reflexively liberated timeless moments of perception.

The Guru as Pilgrim

Indisputably, we are all guests on this planet, all soon to move on. Wherever we live may be owned by us by right of legal contract, but with a broader, selfless view we understand that we are owned by the place in which we live. To escape the sense of ownership, to increase awareness of the actuality of impermanence of all things including life itself, to absorb the transmission-energy in special locations, we move across the face of the planet as pilgrims. Like the Hindu *dashnami* sadhus who for a large part of the year move from temple to temple, from power place to power place, staying not more than three days in a single location, we recognize the truth of impermanence, and that moving from one place to another from birth to death we are pilgrims on this earth. Padmasambhava's buddhist monastic order and the vows it required are unknown, but by all accounts his life consisted of constant travel, beginning in Uddiyana (Orgyen) and ending in Tibet.

If the religious life is a preparation for death—a proposition generally accepted by Buddhists and Hindus—then constant peregrination with its associated absence of ownership, not only of land or structure but also of goods and chattels, facilitates the nonpossessive attitude that allows fluidity and lucidity in change, and change is the principal feature of dying and death. Possessiveness and attachment on the other hand lead to rebirth as a 'dead soul' in the realm of the hungry ghosts. Add to peregrination a sense of the sanctity of life and knowledge of the meaning of power-places and we have 'pilgrimage'. Padmasambhava demonstrates the natural lifestyle of pilgrimage after he was banished from his home and homeland.

Moreover, the map of his peregrination reveals the natural pilgrimage routes in Tibet. His later legend, after he had been confounded with Guru Rinpoche, has him travelling with his consort Yeshe Tsogyel over the entire Tibetan ethnic region, thereby identifying the major power places of the land, and blessing them—mostly natural features—simply by his presence. He provides a further dimension of blessing by concealing treasure-texts and artifacts wherever he meditated. In his apocryphal pilgrimage around Greater Tibet, Padmasambhava naturally moves from one power place to another, and for that reason the Guru Rinpoche caves and places of meditation are none other than the age-old geomantically located power places of the Tibetan plateau, sites that have been used as places of contemplation, refuge and sanctuary throughout the millennia.

The Guru as Treasure-Concealer and Treasure-Finder

Again, transcending space-time, just as the formless dharmakaya is the source of the formed dimensions of *sambhoga* and *nirmana*, so Guru Rinpoche is the nondual source of body, speech and mind. Thus, to say that Padmasambhava concealed the great wealth of treasure-texts (*terma*) and artifacts in the power places of Tibet is allegorical fiction. Guru Rinpoche himself *is* the treasure, and the power places where he is said to have concealed the treasure are actually the flues or conduits through which the nondual reveals itself as the phenomenal revelation of guru-speech, which finally is to be reified as material texts. When Padmasambhava's consort, Yeshe Tsogyel, is introduced into the allegory, she represents a reflection of guru-speech, first as symbols of the revelation in the shape of the dakini script, and secondly as grammatically correct Tibetan text. Yeshe Tsogyel is the Lady of the Lake of Awareness of the Now, but she is also the inimitable unerring scribe who writes it down just exactly as it is.

The power places of Tibet—particularly the Guru Rinpoche caves and locations of treasure—are the hubs of the wheels of revelation, the centers of the mandalas of the terma tradition, particularly the tradition of the Drubpa Kapje, the Eight Buddha-Deities. However, those deities are the inner lightforms, whereas the outer numina are the buddha-protectors bound by Guru Rinpoche to guard the revelations. Their protective function lasts until the propitious synchronicous moment when the predicted tulku-buddha-emanation is present and the crying need of people is evident. Subjected by the Great Exorcist, these protectors are oath-bound to keep the revelations secret until the auspicious moment of discovery, so that untimely or false revelation can never occur.

If terma-treasure is Padmasambhava himself, his tulku buddha emanations are treasure-finders, revealing Guru Rinpoche as texts and artifacts that facilitate their contemporaries' recognition of the nature of mind and to assist them on the path of realization. No distinction need be made between the body emanation and the speech emanation.

The transmission of the word of Guru Rinpoche, who is the buddha-teacher of this aeon, is carried in space-time down the long-lineage of the whispered oral tradition from teacher to student. Such teaching originated with Padmasambhava, or more likely with one of his disciples or emanations such as Bairotsana or King Trisong Detsen. But such lineages are notoriously corruptible, subject to the foibles and limitations of human personality. The short-lineage of revelation, the direct transmission from Kuntuzangpo through Dorjesempa to a tertön treasure-finder, however, keeps the teaching constantly vital and brilliant and relevant to contemporary needs. Garab Dorje was the first such tulku and every treasure-finder is a tulku of Dorjesempa.

These notes are merely a preliminary guide through the rudiments of terma mysteries. It may be objected, for example, that historically the first termas were

material texts and ritual objects that had been hidden in stupas, temple walls or *mani* walls during times of trouble, particularly when the Bon shamans were persecuting Buddhism in the interregnum between the first and second periods of dharma propagation. That is indisputable. But in the context of the precious guru's nondual natural dispensation, what is the difference between a material treasure (*sa-ter*) and a mind-treasure (*gongter*)? If the dualism of body and mind is a conceptual canard, all phenomena, physical and mental, are illusory figments hanging in the spaciousness of mind's nature.

The Guru as Cult Figure and Celebrity

On the exoteric level, the *Zanglingma* provides a linear, chronological, perspective on the multifarious career of a spectacular emanation of Amitabha and Avalokiteshvara. Some would say that it presents a series of 'rebirths' of that emanation, although the narrative begins with a single birth, continues with a life and ends in a single death. Overtly, a series of vignettes have been sewn together to form a progressive allegorical narrative. However, the reader upon whom the space-time delusion has momentarily lost its grip may grok the allegory, and in that moment intuit Guru Rinpoche as a single multi-faceted experience in the ineffable, timeless, here and now. Such a moment of satori, such an epiphany, may be recognized as a momentary recognition of the nature of mind. That recognition may become familiar as a touchstone of every single perception of the flow. If the sense of selfhood remains strong, however, and the dualistic, interpretive functions of mind unequivocally reassert themselves, the ego may deny the universal nondual nature of that experience, externalize its source, project it and focus it upon a figure of spiritual authority. Devout belief in that embodied authority as the source of any subsequent 'realization' is the corollary of this kind of transference.

In the Tibetan-Buddhist arena, the lama is the obvious recipient of such projection, and if his intention is selfless and altruistic, immense benefit can accrue in a give-take relationship of tantric-buddhist skillful means. If the figure of authority is not a conventional, institutional, religious, he may be a genuine, self-sprung, tulku, 'out there', in samsaric duality. In either case, such persons may be identified and reified as authentic emanations of Guru Rinpoche, and like stupas, they may receive well-deserved offering, worship and devotion.

Insofar as lamas and tulkus are subject to endocrinal forces, they suffer the same human frailty as all embodied beings, so that their motivation may always be questioned. Politically appointed tulkus who have been recognized by the religious establishment as a serial link to maintain political stability and family influence are most suspect. However, although the relationship between spiritual mentor and devotee is inevitably exploitative, the devotee becoming a tool in the lama's mundane machinations, mere application of the conventional form of guru-shishya, mentor-student, relationship, will bestow benefit when the time is appropriate and the student is ready.

Through the transference from universal to specific, the nature of mind—otherwise referred to as buddha—which cannot be located anywhere in space or time, and which has no attribute or characteristic, is identified with a person in dualistic samsara. That person upon whom such faith is projected, upon whom a needy individual may focus the necessary projection, can then reify his (or her) own understanding, identifying the form of his samsaric being as a buddha or siddha. With a retinue of credulous disciples and a subjective certainty of his (or her) own spiritual attainment, he is then in a position to establish himself as a spiritual celebrity. He may establish a spiritual circle or a cult. If the moment is ripe, in exceptional situations, he may even found a religion. If he can sustain the illusion of buddha-realization, inestimable value may accrue to devotees who are relieved of the delusion that the nature of mind can ever be trapped in the constantly changing phenomenon of a person, an embodiment, an 'I'. It may also relieve them of the delusion that the nature of mind can ever take the form of an isolate, a separate entity. With such understanding, inseparable from whatever moves, whatever resonates and whatever is aware, whatever is cognized as the totality-field accessed in each timeless moment of the here and now, the guru has become nothing but the nature of mind.

The honest guru's primary function is to disillusion his followers, to facilitate deconstruction of reified mental constructs. But his illusion of buddha may become unsustainable in his mind, and aware of his inadequacy he may consider the option of allowing deluded and suffering beings lost in samsara to project their unfulfilled ideal upon himself, a teacher who is also lost in samsara but is fully aware of it. In that case, the element of self-serving duplicity may still benefit his followers. Thus, provided with a provisional certainty in an essentially uncertain world, the disciples may gain a temporary though delusory respite.

In Tibet, guru-worship, or rather lama-worship, was rationalized and institutionalized as a method to educate and socialize a shamanic tribal society. At least, that is one way to explain the change in the relationship between guru and shishya in the Guhyamantra tantric tradition of the Sacred Word in its passage from India to Tibet. In mahayoga, the human guru is taught as absolute, whereas in the Dzogchen view the provisional nature of guru-worship is revealed. The true guru in Dzogchen atiyoga is *kuntuzangpo*, the all-good *ground of all being*. Otherwise, either the guru is a temporary helper on the path, a *kalyanamitra*, a 'spiritual friend', or an iconic repository of the hopes and fears of souls lost in samsara. When the guru has become an aggregation of projections of an idealized archetype, an untainted icon, free of all human weakness, his private life concealed from public view, in the popular mind he has similarities with Hollywood celebrities. In Tibet, however, the lama's power traditionally extends beyond the religious and social milieu into political and economic areas. In this respect the lama has more in common with other Asian

potentates like the Ismaili Muslim Aga Khan or the late Hindu guru Satya Sai Baba.

Implicit in this entire introduction, and particularly in this section on the guru as celebrity, is a plea to interpret the basic message of Guru Pema on a transcultural or, rather, supra-cultural level. Consonant with the loss of self-identity—ego-loss—in Dzogchen atiyoga, where one is involuntarily and unselfconsciously promoted from consumer to creator, from dealer to artist, from editor to author, from pyramidal inferior to universal equal, the submissive follower unknowingly becomes guru-peer. To attain an intimate relationship with the ‘three roots’—yidam, dakini and the true, nonreified, guru—implies an internalization of the role of priest. In general, priests stand between god(s) and human beings, claiming moral superiority and privileged knowledge, while knowing in their gut that when they stand alone naked, and particularly at the time of foreseeing their death, all men are equal in the mandala of the all-good and in the light of nondual awareness of the here and now. As in pre-reformation roman catholicism, in Tibet, on the path of liberation, the priest tended to usurp the natural function of the aspirant’s mind. The lama who at the high moment of initiation transmitted the secret mantra as an expulsion from his backside was making a commentary upon the implications of such a ritual appropriation, upon the reification and ritualization of nonconceptual dharma.

To the devotee, the lover of god, or lover of the devi, the true guru may appear as the indigent sadhu begging on the side of the road; to a Western redneck he might be a clown from a barbarian culture. To the Tibetan peasant the Lama was an omniscient priest with a divine aura who could give or take life with impunity. Today, to many in the West, he is part Don Quixote and part Wandering Jew; to the Southeast Asian Chinese he is an alchemist able to conjure gold from mercury. To many true believers, he is a cult figure of superhuman status dispensing blessings both mundane and divine; to the unthinking world at large, he is a media celebrity, a star in the firmament of religious accomplishment. The literary guru-mythology of the *Zanglingma*, in a series of disparate vignettes, shows him as a man for all seasons, an embodiment with many masks and guises, a realized bodhisattva, and a buddha-divinity. This revelation may induce the Dzogchen vision of paradigmatic enigma, beyond the intellect to conceptualize or comprehend.

The Great Compassionate Guru, Savior and Liberator

For children, for believers, for cannibal savages and for barbarians who have been converted to the ‘white’ path, through his great compassion, Guru Rinpoche manifests as the savior of all beings. Such compassion shines through every page of the *Zanglingma* and is the very essence of the Way of the Sacred Word. Academic priorities and logical rigor sometimes may obscure it or the compassion may be eclipsed by magic, black or white. Sometimes dogmatic

instruction turns it into a martial discipline. But just as much as Tibetan vernacular conversation is full of ‘*Tujeche!*’ and ‘*Nyingie!*’, so the Tibetan dharma-reality is suffused with sympathy and kindness.

The legends of Padmasambhava describe the modes of manifestation of his compassion. Compassion is the root, the trunk, the branch and the leaves. Everything is great compassion. It is inseparable from our ground of being. If we feel that we have become alienated from that compassion, then Padmasambhava has left indications of how to reunite with him. Mahayoga, anuyoga and atiyoga are the principal means of accomplishing that sense of unity, but for those whose karma precludes commitment to the practice of those mind yogas and an appropriate lifestyle, pure devotion to Guru Rinpoche is the key.

His promise to reveal himself to his devotees on every tenth day of the moon is crucial. Such a promise and revelation establishes indisputably that ‘Guru Rinpoche’ is a felt-experience, an existential rhapsody of identity with buddha and that such an epiphany may be accessed by his students at propitious moments. The most favorable, propitious, time is when the waxing moon is at two-thirds of its full size, when the male energy governs and the dakini energy is rising strongly but not yet dominant. At that time Padmasambhava, Pema Jungné, promises to extend his blessing, which is evoked in the vision of *The Seven Line Prayer*.

Exoterically, *The Seven Line Prayer* describes the conventional image of Padmasambhava and carries a mantra that is guaranteed to invoke him and achieve a mystical union with him. The underlying esoteric interpretations presented by Jamgon Mipham in his *White Lotus* commentary divulge a breadth of meaning that embraces all Dzogchen adepts, including yogins and yoginis of anuyoga and atiyoga.

Another text for recitation, achieving similar results, is *The Lotus Precepts*, the *Katang Dueba*, which is a longer more discursive evocation of Padmasambhava than *The Seven Line Prayer*. This text is a condensation of the monumental *Pema Katang Shedrakma* of Orgyen Lingpa, which presents the guru myths in extended, discursive form. *The Epitome of the Lotus Precepts* contains a section of prophecy and a transmission of the GURU PEMA mantra, a mantra considered by Nyingma lamas as more potent than the MANI PEME mantra of the glorious Chenrezik.

Finally, Padmasambhava’s compassion is demonstrated by concern for all the people of Tibet in the heart-advice that he leaves them in the last twenty chapters of the *Zanglingma*.

If Padmasambhava liberates only some of us from the wheel of life, from the endless succession of rebirths while wandering in samsara, through his great compassion he may save others from rebirth in the lower realms. If we lack

insufficient sensitivity for the MANI PEME or the GURU PEMA mantra to work optimally, if we possess just a little faith in Guru Pema, at least we may be sure of a good rebirth!

The Guru as Preceptor

The essential purpose of the guru-myth is to describe the manner in which Guru Rinpoche's enlightenment works for us and how his activity works for the sake of others. The story of Guru Pema's life is thus a paradigm, an exemplary model, to be emulated by his yogin-followers and a source of inspiration and faith for his devotees. Since the form of the story is a narrative describing the events in Padmasambhava's life, it is also a history, a series of episodes in the establishment of the buddha-dharma in Tibet, as indicated in its extended Tibetan title. The *Zanglingma* may contain an important account of the history of King Trisong Detsen's reign, the Empire period and the first propagation of the dharma in Tibet and the origin of the Nyingma lineages, but this is secondary to the main theme—the Guru's exposition of Dzogchen vision, meditation and action.

Guru Pema's teaching can be apprehended in various ways. The high teaching of the *Zanglingma*, of course, resides in the metaphoric symbols of the myth and the inner meaning of the legends and anecdotes (Chapters 1-5 in India and 6-11 in Tibet). Formally, this is known as symbolic lineal transmission. In tantric literature, the verbal symbolism of metaphor and allegory, its forms of ambiguity and use of the twilight language (*sandhyabhāṣa*), convey that higher meaning. The mouth-to-ear whispered transmission is written down as Guru Rinpoche's outer (Chapters 15, 23, 30-39) and inner (Chapters 21, 22, 41, 42) precepts of instruction. The texts translated from Sanskrit, as opposed to the symbolic and whispered-teaching lineages of the revealed treasure-text tradition, are revelations written down in chronological time (Chapters 12, 17).

If we take the 'twenty-two acts' of Padmasambhava as the topics of his paradigmatic teaching, then these twenty-two aspects of mind's nature are shown as perfect in themselves and the full scope of Guru Pema's *maya* is revealed.

The secret instruction, the specifically Dzogchen teaching, can be categorized according to the Nyingma nine-yana system's three highest approaches: mahayoga, anuyoga and atiyoga. Mahayoga is comprised of communal ritual offering and propitiation of buddha-deities and solitary creative stage visualization of buddha-deities and recitation of their mantras. Such ritual meditation serves to induce and focus an integrated intimation of great-perfection reality, which—notwithstanding the employment of anthropomorphic symbols—is a formless vision. Anuyoga is the actualization of the creative vision developed in mahayoga in both contemplative and dynamic-integrative praxis. Atiyoga, although provided with potent pointers that evoke our natural disposition, is not so much practice of any kind but

rather life itself, known by simply relaxing into whatever circumstances our karma presents to us and appreciating its essential nature. To be formalistic, the *Zanglingma* teaches Dzogchen through mahayoga, anuyoga and the *semde* series of atiyoga.

Insofar as the atiyoga Dzogchen view suffuses the technical practice of mahayoga and anuyoga, these latter two approaches may be assimilated to Dzogchen in its radical, elementary, essential nature. That nature is Guru Rinpoche's dharma-reality, his teaching, or more specifically the essential nature of the transmission of his teaching. That reality—the nature of mind, the ground of being, the nondual awareness of the now—may be indicated, or pointed out, by means of nine verbal formulae. First, it is nonreferential; it has no points of cognitive reference, no goal and no purpose. Second, it arises spontaneously in a timeless moment; it has no existence as such. Third, it is our identity as totality; our 'self' is all inclusive. Fourth, it is awareness of the here and now; it is a timeless instant that has no cause or condition. Fifth, it is nonaction; it precedes dualistic qualification and, therefore, no action or technique can induce it. Sixth, it is complete joy, pure pleasure, beyond bliss. Seventh, it is nonduality; it is unity, and therefore ineffable and ineluctable. Eighth, it is a boundless sphere in which macrocosm and microcosm are one. Ninth, it is the natural dispensation; it is home.

Thus, in the Dzogchen dharma-reality taught by Guru Rinpoche, we are free of all specific identity. Floating on the surface or hovering weightlessly, the lotus-born adept is free of the mud at the bottom of the lake in the here and now. And we are all lotus-born—if only we would admit it; if only we could allow it. We are all free of all past rebirth, free of the traumatizing experience of womb, birth canal and infancy. We are free of everything that provides the root conditioning from which we must strive to liberate and exonerate ourselves. When we recognize the nature of mind, the cumulative potentialities of experience that constitute karma are already transformed into the spontaneous compassionate responsiveness that is buddha.

Some of the components of our conditioned identity are genetic karmas, personality, and physical, energetic and mental propensities and habit patterns. When we recognize the original face of our being in the now, rather than reifying father and mother as parents, reifying our black, brown or white color as race, reifying geographical or linguistic space as a national entity, and reifying what we eat as a means to potency, beauty or longevity, then we can say confidently with Guru Padmasambhava:

*My father is total awareness, Kuntuzangpo;
 My mother is the continuum of emptiness, Kuntuzangmo;
 My race is inseparable space and awareness;
 My country is the unborn continuum of emptiness;*

*For sustenance, I eat dualistic conceptions
And my work here is to slay dualistic defilements.*

This statement encapsulates the quality of Dzogchen vision and includes key Dzogchen terms that have the potential to take us into Dzogchen nonmeditation. In everything that arises in nonmeditation, in all experience of pleasure or pain, an integral intuitive understanding establishes the Dzogchen vision as spaciousness and awareness. In this respect, the life of Guru Pema is lived as the Great Perfection.

The events in Padmasambhava's life are extraordinary in that they are rarely to be found and also because those events comprise Tibetan history in the making; yet, nevertheless, they are lived in the common light of day, experienced just like every sensory perception of all sentient beings. The consciousness of sentient beings is mundane, identical only insofar as it is awareness of experience as the essential nature of phenomenal existence; the difference between the guru's experience and common experience lies in the recognition of awareness of that reality, not in the quality or quantity of what is cognized. Whatever Guru Rinpoche does, regardless of our perception of its conventional moral value or efficacy, it is a demonstration of Dzogchen attainment.

Since in the Dzogchen vision whatever experience arises is perfect as it stands, what need is there for modification of the circumstances of its arising or the cognitive state that apprehends it? Dzogchen meditation is simple recognition of the nature of reality as it is presented in a moment of spaciousness. However, because the *raison d'être* of Guru Rinpoche—defined originally by Amitabha's vow to remain in samsara as a tulku of Chenrezik until all beings are free of suffering—is to assist people and all sentient life in every possible way, there should be no limit to his store of skillful means. The guru must be familiar with all meditation practices, and with all modes of approach to buddha so that he can demonstrate whatever is relevant to his or her level of karmic display and to be able to emanate the illusion necessary to create a salutary, curative, didactic effect. Thus Padmasambhava shows how a karmically favored human being approaches a guru and receives ordination as a monk and is given initiation and instruction on the tantric path. The tantric meditation practices that are stressed in the *Zanglingma* are the mahayoga techniques of the Drubpa Kapje, the Eight Buddha Deities, some of which Padmasambhava initiated in Tibet, the kriya-yoga practices introduced by Nub Namkhai Nyingpo, and the Dzogchen atiyoga semde tradition taught by Bairotsana and Vimalamitra.

The approach to buddha in the supreme tantric vehicle assumes identity with the buddha-nature that is pure from the beginning. The principal preliminary meditation practice of initiates into the higher tantras is the yoga of identity with Guru Pema (*guru-yoga*). The legends of Guru Pema elaborate the quality of an exemplary life totally informed by the Dzogchen view. When as a prince

Padmasambhava kills a minister's son with his trident the incident is explained as an expedient to teach both his stepfather and the murdered boy's father about the nature of reality; there is no trace of guilt here. When Guru Pema is living the lifestyle of a sadhu in the jungles and cremation grounds of northern India, he demonstrates how extremes of sexual energy and aggression are utilized for the benefit of others in the ritual activity called 'sexual union and deliverance'. But the circumstances of Guru Pema's life, in the light of the pristine awareness of the here and now, do not differ from the events that arise in our own stream of consciousness, which is inseparable from that same nondual reality, all our own daily experience

Going Nowhere, Doing Nothing: The Flight of the Garuda

In the years since the work that comprises *The Flight of the Garuda* was done, a wealth of Dzogchen texts has been translated and published. This has provided insight into both the breadth and depth of Dzogchen. With the more sophisticated Dzogchen vocabulary in English now in use, the texts in *The Flight of the Garuda* compendium could be usefully retranslated, but the revised American edition contains only minimal corrections to the original translations so that the integrity of those translations could be maintained.

To the four basic texts I have added a translation of Patrul Rinpoche's *Extraordinary Reality of Sovereign Wisdom*. If it is possible that a Dzogchen meditation manual exists then this is it. Shabkar Lama's *Flight of the Garuda* includes some precepts and meditation instruction on Dzogchen preliminaries, and indeed Dzogchen meditation itself. But *Extraordinary Reality* provides a complete practice including instruction on view, meditation, and action. Simply reading the text may induce the state of nonmeditation that is then to be sustained in the meditation session. In this way it is an initiatory text and, as Patrul Rinpoche asserts, identical to the mind of Garab Dorje himself. Since my first translation of this text was published in 1982 several excellent versions have become available. The improvement of this very important translation over the years is indicative of the increase of our understanding and expression of Dzogchen.

The Starting Point: Ignorance

To avoid the unnecessary obstacles that the ego will erect when it is asked to accept its own ignorance as the starting point, ignorance must be clearly defined. In Buddhism ignorance is dualistic perception, the absence of nondual awareness (*ma rig pa*, *avidya*). It is easier to accept our failure to achieve buddhahood than to come to terms with living in ignorance. Still, insofar as 'thinking of the key confirms the prison', any consideration of the means to attain enlightenment confirms our ignorance. At the same time, thinking of the key asserts the possibility of freedom, even if we are ignorant of it. My understanding is that everyone at some time has glimpsed a state of beatitude that is liberation from the state of ignorance, or nirvana, although it may not have been recognized as such at the time. Further, I think that the Buddha's liberation is known to us all, familiar like an old friend with whom we have lost contact but whose mind we know intimately. If it were not so, how could the imagery of the Mahayana sutras describing the buddhas' pure lands strike such vibrant chords of recognition and appreciation? How is it that so many of us

identify immediately with the events of Sakyamuni's life? Why do we immediately intuit the veracity of the abhidharma's psychological analysis of the process of enlightenment?

Childhood with its 'trailing clouds of glory' can be the most fertile period of nondual experience, the least 'ignorant' period of life, because the preconceptions and preoccupations that form the veil of mental concepts have not yet evolved into rigid mindsets. Chemical psychedelics can, if only temporarily, have the effect of freeing those concepts, and the result is 'regression' to a childlike state of freedom from conceptual blocks. In the mahasiddhas' songs of realization the analogy of childhood is employed frequently to evoke the siddha's state of enlightenment. Seen in this light 'ignorance' is not only the ephemeral twin veils, the veils of passion and mental concept, obscuring what the sages and scriptures assure us is the natural state of nondual awareness, it is the means of reaching a fundamental level of reality, omnipresent and indestructible—*vajra*-like, that we can know experientially and can learn to abide in constantly and uninterruptedly.

This is not to underestimate the dogged persistence of the proclivities that give rise to emotional clouds and incomplete thoughtforms that obscure reality. One of the most significant features of Dzogchen, an aspect that characterizes it as a 'shortcut approach' to buddhahood, is a glad acceptance of the virtual impossibility of eradicating the propensities conditioned genetically, karmically, or in childhood 'education' that produce our habitual reaction patterns. This understanding is reflected in the basic meditation precept 'Leave alone whatever arises in the mind. Do not seek to change or alter anything. Do not seek to dissolve or reify. It is all perfect as it stands,' and so on. Relaxing the mind, the propensity to evaluate, judge, and react positively or negatively to whatever arises, falls away. Thus detachment evolves. Detachment is the key to penetrating the two veils of emotion and thoughtform. In other words, the veils are not to be torn down but, rather, penetrated by the single third eye of perfect insight that perceives the emptiness within through detachment from the form without.

Thus we have a more precise notion of ignorance: it is a function of attachment. The unifying factor of nondual awareness is the emptiness of both sensory stimulus and penetrating insight. Dualistic perception, ignorant perception, is the tendency to objectify the form of the sensory stimulus due to attachment to it. In a more blunt formulation, for the Dzogchen yogin hatred, lust, and the other passions are not ignorance; they are friendly helpers on the path that create energy and light, and they turn the wheel of life to create the six mental environments that give our lives shape. Thus, although still we may be faced with heaven and hell, the animals' jungle realm, the realm of hungry ghosts, and so on, when we are free of attachment we are exemplars demonstrating the techniques of liberation in the guise of the 'hungry-ghost buddha', 'dharmaraja

buddha', 'lord-of-beasts buddha', etc. This is one of the meanings of the axiom 'The starting point is the goal.'

Initiation

The underlying structure of this essay accords with the traditional triad of starting point (or ground), path and goal. In Dzogchen 'The starting point is the path, the path is the goal, and the goal is the starting point.' If the mind is dull or meditation unusually bleak, a predictable response to that statement may be 'Since there is nowhere to go and nothing to do, what is the purpose of Dzogchen, and why practice any form of yoga?' 'The starting point is the goal' refers to the unchanged form of awareness: the forms that arise are the same as ever. The difference lies in the all-important detachment from these forms and the cessation of grasping and clinging. The purpose of Dzogchen is to bring the aspirant to recognition of what is as obvious as daylight; and the blinders to recognition are attachment to the twin veils of emotion and intellect. With a modicum of detachment it becomes evident what happens to emotion and thought. They may not disappear but there is a radical transformation of quality, and motivation becomes that of the bodhisattva vow. Thus, although there may be no striving toward a bodhisattva's state of mind, there is a spontaneous evolution toward it. However, in a state of ignorance, how do we meditate with detachment? If nothing is to be done, if nothing can be done because all effort is derived from counterproductive attachment, how can we break the continuum of ignorance? The answer is initiation, initiation by direct introduction to the nature of mind. Such initiation induces the state of mind that breaks the vicious circle of moral and mental cause and effect, replacing 'horizontal' rational thought processes with a 'vertical', creative, muse/dakini-inspired effusion of primal awareness. Meditation upon that state (formless meditation) deconditions consciousness, leaving the original existential condition to arise spontaneously moment by moment.

We are still not out of the woods. If initiation is understood as an enlightenment experience, how can this spontaneous event be induced? Is it simply a matter of formal initiation? This problem should not be glossed over. What error to mistake formal initiation for a real initiatory experience upon which meditation can be based! Initiation implies discovery of the real buddha-lama (in distinction to a human preceptor), and seeking precludes finding. The basis of Dzogchen achievement is not attained without initiation; initiation is the function of the Lama; and the 'Lama' is a state of acausal primal awareness. The Indian mahasiddha Naropa, the 'Indomitable', with his unflagging quest for the unfindable represented by his guru, Tilopa, is our exemplar. Without experiential initiation we must practice preliminary techniques and the *trekcho* meditations described in *The Flight of the Garuda*. These are the meditative techniques of Dzogchen, so finely honed by generations of yogic experiment in the

laboratory of the mind that inevitably they bring quick results. They prepare the mind for initiation, and initiatory experience can arise during practice of them.

The mainstream Dzogchen schools, the *Longchen Nyینگtik* lineages for example, do not teach the uncompromising dogma of sudden liberation, the doctrine that implies the futility of attempting to condition the relative mind to an absolute reality. Going beyond specious argument there is commitment to a middle path of 'absolute relativity' in which the aspirant is induced to accept buddhahood intuitively here and now. In practice, consideration of the dichotomy of sudden and gradual enlightenment should not enter the mind, while at the same time the aspirant practices on the graduated path that may lead to the pith meditations of *The Flight of the Garuda*. But service to sentient beings, generosity, regular offerings of flowers in the temple, prostrations, visualization, and mantra are all skillful means to the attainment of Dzogchen, and any of them can provide the psychic environment in which initiation, or sudden liberation into one's true condition, is achieved. Furthermore, such practices generate vital merit—credit in the karmic bank. On this path the mind may be reconditioned by replacing useless, confused thought processes with merit-generating processes that induce the requisite susceptibility to the Lama's blessing—premonition of initiation—and the ground of initiation is cultivated thereby.

The nature of the ground of initiation can best be understood by introducing the basic concepts and meditations that the Buddha Sakyamuni taught. It may appear at times that Tantra in general, and Dzogchen in particular, are far divorced from the teaching of early Buddhism. On the contrary, it is assumed that the fundamental truisms contained in the four noble truths form the bedrock of the aspirant's mentality: suffering as the nature of existence, desire as the principal human drive, nirvana as the only human goal worthy of aspiration, detachment as the path to happiness. Any progress toward eradication, neutralization, transformation, or full awareness of the twin veils of emotion and mental concepts can prepare the ground for initiation. Discursive contemplation derived from the four noble truths can be highly efficacious in establishing a receptive attitude to the Lama. When such analysis is understood experientially the roots of desire and suffering are cut. If our attachment to thoughtforms can be decreased, gaps in our slavish obedience to the mind's 'rational' dictates leaves space for the Lama to make himself known. Since much neurotic or uncontrollable thought is provoked by fear—our insecurities sometimes arise in the most outrageous thoughtforms—fear can be reduced by quietening anxiety about the nature of existence and the purpose of life. Experiential understanding tames our mundane hopes and fears about food, shelter, and clothing, and the eight worldly obsessions (pleasure and pain, ignominy and fame, praise and blame, loss and gain)—all the rubbish of the mind.

The following questions and answers were the Buddha Sakyamuni's own. The four noble truths arose out of these questions on the nature of existence and reality. The primary question is 'What is the principal attribute of existence?' Answer: suffering, the first noble truth. The second question is 'What is the cause of suffering?' Answer: desire, the second noble truth. The answer to the first question is reached by equating existence with suffering. Existence consists of birth, sickness, old age, and death. Existence is sustained on every level by desire: desire (including its antithesis) and its concomitant attachment and clinging are the dynamics of existence. Any taste of true happiness that we achieve in existence is the result of the cessation of attachment. Happiness is not nonexistence since the same situations (birth, sickness, etc.) still arise; and it is not existence because the quality of happiness is unending, empty, blissful awareness. If happiness does not possess these attributes it is not the buddhas' happiness, but rather, a lesser degree of suffering in which attachment is still operative. Thus, in the buddhas' terms, the happiness of the gods is not true happiness because attachment, as fear of eventual loss of divinity through death, works in the gods' minds like a canker conceived in their spring of seeming contentment to mature in a winter of bile and gall.

Suffering is failure to get what we want; suffering is getting what we do not want; suffering is fear of loss; suffering is losing what we have. After obtaining our desires we suffer the pride of possession; we suffer jealousy if someone else has what we want or something better than we have. In all these situations desire and grasping are the cause of our suffering. To take sexual desire, one universal desire, as an example: we suffer pangs of desire; we suffer the anguish of longing; we suffer unsatisfied lust; we suffer selfish satisfaction; we suffer loss in lust's aftermath; we suffer loss of the object of desire; we suffer the perversions of desire; we suffer unformed adolescent desire, the frustrations of mature desire, and the rage of impotent desire; we suffer lovesickness, falling out of love, and all the neuroses of love and desire; and we suffer sexually transmitted disease. There is some form of pain involved in every stage of sexual desire. Indeed, love and desire are all suffering unless and until there is detachment from this desire. Whatever of the buddhas' happiness there is in desire, and in its corollary love, is the result of transcendence of desire, a state obtained through eradication, neutralization, or intensification of passion (in the *hinayana*, *mahayana* and *vajrayana* respectively). The third and fourth noble truths are the truth of cessation of desire (nirvana) and the truth of the path to cessation, which is practical experience of buddhadharma, particularly Dzogchen precepts.

The yogin is separated from those who have no knowledge of the four noble truths by his conviction that happiness has nothing to do with satisfaction or satiation of desire. By karmic propensity, by the grace of a teacher, by fortuitous revelation or insight, he has seen that nothing so ephemeral as specific desire fulfilled is worth the striving. Life is short; death is always at hand; the potential

of the human being is far too great to waste on simple psychological, sensual, or physical gratification. He must have had a vision of the greater existential potential, a vision partaken of by yogins, saints, seers, and sages in every part of the world since time began. His definition of happiness begins at freedom from desire. And what remains after desire no longer directs his body, speech, and mind? Simple but pure sensory perception, and that sensory perception is rooted in nondual mind.

Such was the Buddha Sakyamuni's insight. Virtually the entire buddhist canon, both Sutra and Tantra, is concerned in some way with the mechanics of desire and of sensory perception, the part played by ethics and behavioral discipline, and particularly in the Mahayana by selfless giving, which arises simultaneously with the attainment of the primal awareness inherent in unobstructed sensual perception. To comprehend the sophistication and complexity of the various solutions to a problem that in its bold, unadorned, interrogative form seems to be a simple psychological problem, but which upon investigation turns into an insoluble, labyrinthine enigma, we need only look at the mandalas, mantras, and metaphysical equations that constitute a root tantra. Such is the complexity of mind, and it is all in answer to the question of how to sustain pure sensory perception unclouded by thought and emotion.

Sensory perception begins at the moment of birth and continues every moment until death. In sleep our senses are interiorized in dream. What is the constant in this sensory process? It can only be the absolute element of being. Some Hindus call it *satchittananda*—truth, consciousness, and bliss. In Buddhism, since this constant cannot be located or specified in any way, it is called *sunyata*—emptiness. This emptiness, which can also be conceived as a 'fullness', is synonymous with 'thatness', 'the nature of mind', 'the womb of buddhahood', and 'reality': there is no trace of world denial in the buddhist tantric view of life. Emptiness does not exist—if it can be said to exist at all—as an independent entity; it is best described as 'all-pervasive', 'all-penetrating'; and there is nothing that it excludes. Further, since it is identified with the nature of mind, once detachment is achieved it is with emptiness that the yogin identifies, and identifying with emptiness he identifies with the nature of all things. In this way the buddhas' omniscience and omnipotence are a function of simple sensory perception, and simple—pure—sensory perception is the starting point and the goal.

The ground of initiation is laid by absorption of this vision and by any of the innumerable techniques of meditation that facilitate it. The primal awareness, the pure nondual awareness of sensory perception that is the starting point and the goal, is also the initiation. I have already defined initiation as the enlightenment experience that is the condition *sine qua non* of finding the buddha-lama. The buddha-lama is the agent of the initiation. After initiation the practice of maintaining constant union with him is the essential Dzogchen discipline. Upon initiation, both relative and absolute pledges (the *SAMAYAS*)

are sworn: the relative pledges of buddha-body, buddha-speech, and buddha-mind support the yogin in action, speech, and samadhi, while the central practice is to condition his being in maintaining the constant primal awareness inherent in each moment of perception until nondual vision is the irrevocable norm.

Karmic Acceleration

The Dzogchen yogin consciously entered a dangerous, shortcut, existential path by committing himself to his SAMAYAs at the time of initiation. It is probable that the wisdom that guided him was the precipitation of a serious trauma, or was it the product of a series of extraordinary events that caused rapid karmic acceleration? Meditation is the most prudent, controlled, and highly tested karmic accelerator. War, rape, a near-fatal accident or disease, any profound emotional trauma, can also give the victim an understanding of his own mortality and bring consequent appreciation of the rare and precious opportunity that human birth affords. Such experiences impress the victim with the significance of the truth of impermanence and with the urgency of making up for time lost, and it involves an awakening to the laws of moral or behavioral cause and effect (karma). Such understanding is vital in accelerating karma to the point where renunciation of the hedonistic world is a necessary prerequisite to continued existence on the planet, and where it becomes evident that one's own best interests are intrinsically bound up with the good of all sentient beings. The four mindbenders (contemplation of the precious human body, impermanence, the laws of karma and karmic retribution) comprising exercises preliminary to tantric meditation, are undoubtedly effective and induce such realization without risking life and limb or sanity, and they may provide other benefits besides. But experiential lessons engraved in consciousness never to be forgotten, informing every impulse, provide the more valuable foundation to Dzogchen practice.

Entering the Stream

The stream winner is already a yogin. He gains this status by a profound recognition of his own ignorance. Ignorance, defined above as an absence of nondual awareness, is experienced in everyday life as confusion, neurosis, stupidity, sloth, bewilderment, and unfettered emotivity and thought. There are vulgarisms that best describe this state. Recognition of the emotional confusion of our lives and the psychologically negative role of interpretive, judgmental thought is the first positive step in the direction of attaining a higher state of awareness, and our emotions are the most accessible field of experience where, with penetrating insight, emptiness can be perceived. As *The Flight of the Garuda* (Song 13) has it, 'How ridiculous to expect to find primal awareness and emptiness after you have suppressed passion!' Thus the Dzogchen precept 'Do not suppress thought and emotion' is as valid for the egoist, whose superego refuses to allow him to acknowledge his base self, as it is for the self-righteous,

pious, 'disciplined' altruist who rationalizes away his fears and inhibitions by invoking the moral code of his order. To deny desire is to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. In this way recognition of our confusion, which is only thought and emotion, is the beginning of the path. Complete and perfect recognition of the nature of mind is initiation itself. But it is a very lucky person indeed who has a moment of sudden recognition of the nature of his entire being and sustains it. Most of us go through a process of self-knowledge gradually unfolding successive levels of the subconscious mental waste that have accumulated since childhood and through many lives. The revelation of this subconscious material can be a very painful experience, exacerbated by the pain inherent in understanding how far we fall short of the view we have of ourselves. Some New Age cults are dedicated to the admirable task of revealing this aspect of the psyche, each cult with its own aims and different degrees of compassion for the initiate. In Dzogchen, recognition of the nature of mind alone is the aim. Once this is achieved, the power of pure perception with its inherent self-originated pure presence leads on to perception of the next instant of self-revelation, producing a stream of consciousness that can become a continuum of pure pleasure and delight. Confession is the ritual formulation of this necessary psychic cleaning. The Dzogchen prayer of confession, 'Emptying the Depths of Hell', shows how the Dzogchen vision must be applied to whatever mental rubbish or conflicting emotions are revealed during the time of self-appraisal. To identify with or reject the contents of one's mental rubbish are both mistakes leading to a false view that escapes the reality of our own being: it is evident that the dangers of departing from a neutral, middle view into extreme, potentially unhealthy reactions and emotional upheavals can produce insanity. Indeed, even if this process of purification is practiced in the light of Dzogchen vision, the dangers are manifold. *The Flight of the Garuda* mentions only the greatest evil (Song 16), which is identification with the vast psychic power released at the end of the process, creating a malicious demonic force. Another more potent technique in the canon of preliminary Dzogchen instruction teaches the initiate how to evoke the psychic environments produced by the various six basic emotions and how to utilize emotion to fuel this fire. This is instruction in the method of recognition of emotion and thought when they arise in daily practice.

To apply the axiom 'the starting point is the goal' to this particular aspect of the path, recognition is the first act of the initiate and the last, and it is the path itself. The ground of the path consists of emotion and thought. The more intense the emotion, and the more fearful and fragmented the thought, the greater the potential for the light and awareness that penetrates to the emptiness of the form: the path consists of a razor's edge that the yogin walks in constant peril of falling into the vajra-hell. However, in the mainstream of Dzogchen practice, this razor's edge is internalized. Passion is not to be invoked and exaggerated in any public forum. The uncontrolled yogin is not free of moral cause and effect, and gross literal practice of these precepts will result in a fall

as surely as smoke arises from fire. Only if the yogin's karma is such that recognition is insufficient to neutralize gross active manifestation of passion will he fall into the error of taking the meditation into passionate situations outside the retreat hut. The overriding precept is 'neither indulge nor reject' in respect to the situations that karma provides, and constant training in this practice modifies karma, as 'horizontal' or linear causation becomes subservient to the 'vertical' effusion of compassionate energy.

Dharma as a Raft

The Dharma is likened to a raft carrying sentient beings across the ocean of life. On the bank of the other shore is the death beyond which is eternal life. In the case of the Dzogchen adept there awaits a rainbow body. The mind of the adept becomes one with the vast field of space that is the ground of being. Out of this ground are emanated all of samsara and nirvana in variegated lightforms, and tulkus are manifest in bodies of light to work for the salvation of all beings. The raft of Dharma is abandoned on the other shore, for here the names of samsara and nirvana are unknown, the path called no more learning begins, and simultaneous with the landing is the realization that the Dharma is as temporal and ephemeral as the rest of creation and that its truth is expedient to accomplishment of its own end. Its purpose is usurped by no-purpose, for the keyword on the other shore is spontaneity. Certainly, a purpose can be discerned by the ignorant conceptualizing mind, and clearly the intent of all movement and quiescence is the enlightenment of all sentient beings. But the acasual, nonoriginated emanations, which comprise the dance of the dakini, arise adventitiously and spontaneously, forming a synchronistic pattern lacking evident linear relationship. However, from the point of view of the devotee at the boarding stage on the near shore, the raft seems to be an absolute. There must be no doubt as to the efficacy of the method upon which the *sadhaka's* entire life fortune and future lives depend. So the Lama and the scriptures make much of the safety of each particular boat, stressing the superior design and construction that allows quick and easy access to the other shore. In Dzogchen the proclivity for doubt is especially potent, and invariably at some point the questions Why meditate? and What use is the Dharma? will arise. Before realization of the nature of reality as emptiness, of form as phantom and illusion, of speech as empty echo, and of the Dharma as an expendable prop becomes a spontaneous, reflexive response, there is danger of the yogin cutting off the hand that feeds him while his appetite is yet unsated. *The Flight of the Garuda* (Song16) recommends re-commitment and re-initiation at the Lama's feet in times of doubt and pride.

Vision

Vision, in this context, is an unchanging perspective on the nature of reality. The path, the four noble truths, the nature of ignorance, and Dzogchen, are all

vision. In the fourfold frame of analysis of the path provided by vision, meditation, action, and the goal, vision or view is the first topic, and everything that can be written, spoken, or thought is seen from the standpoint of Dzogchen vision. This entire work is a commentary on Dzogchen vision, and the discursive mind is the filter through which the vision is expressed. Another analysis identifies vision as the starting point, meditation as the path, and action as the goal. This view teaches a valuable truth about the fundamental but limited use of the intellect, but vision has another meaning, which is best translated as *seeing*. This is the practical aspect of the precept vision as opposed to the theoretical exercise in this verbal explanation of the Dzogchen yogin's perspective. Perhaps the only distinction between these two aspects is the level of clarity of the mind involved. When the Lama writes, his thoughts are the direct expression of his enlightened detachment at the moment of writing. When he rises from his seat of inspiration his vision is sustained. He still 'sees' all appearances as buddha-body, all sound as the buddha-speech, and all thought as pure buddha-awareness. When the Lama thinks 'all emptiness is form and all form is emptiness' (if such an absurdity ever crosses his mind) it is so. When we think such a thought, we may be affected for good or bad by the degree of our attachment to the words.

There is a dialectic in Dzogchen thought, difficult to catch and analyze, that is effective in detaching the mind from all concepts whatsoever and persuading the intellect that the middle path of perfect detachment is the path to that holistic balance wherein the human potential for power and awareness is maximized. Evidently, this process is not *neti neti* (not this, not that), the process of systematic denial and refutation of whatever concept arises, which has been employed by Hindu schools to great effect. Rather it is an application of Arya Nagarjuna's formula of fourfold refutation (not x; not not-x; not both x and not x; not neither x nor not x). The nature of the Dzogchen yogin's reality is frequently described as indeterminable or that which cannot be described by any of the eight extremes (coming into being or ceasing to be, eternal or momentary, existent or nonexistent, as appearance or as emptiness). This indeterminable nature of the Dzogchen yogin's reality can be restated in the anuyoga metaphor: 'the energies of the right and the left psychic channels emptied into the central channel, the *avadhuti*'. When a perfect holistic balance is obtained, the excluded middle is realized. Guru Chowang's confessional Emptying the Depths of Hell is a fine expression of this balancing act.

Since no concept is ultimately valid, every concept is valid to some degree. The validity of an idea is determined by its efficacy. Ideas such as those embodied in the bodhisattva vow and the *Heart Sutra* are universally efficacious, although even these transcendental notions may be poison in the minds of some unbalanced individuals. Every idea has its time and place. From the Dzogchen viewpoint argument as to the ultimate validity of an idea is the occupation of fools.

Meditation as the Path

If vision is the function of pure perception, *meditation* is an unbroken stream of *seeing*. (*Action* is the dynamic form of the yogin's being.) Dzogchen meditation is a formless meditation, which means that there is no object upon which to concentrate, no visualization to construct and contemplate, no distinction made between subjective cognizer and sensory object. Meditation in the Dzogchen context is the active expression of nondual awareness. It is outside the realm of cause and effect, so there can be no question of directing the mind toward any form of samadhi. Whatever arises appears spontaneously without coming into existence or ceasing to be, and the awareness from which it is inseparable is likewise an aspect of the continuum of space, color, and name that is beyond the function of the mind to express. Attachment and detachment are perceptual errors in the dualistic realm of sensory object and mental subject: in Dzogchen meditation there is no duality and no problem generated by ignorance.

The Dzogchen meditations described in the translations herein are preliminary exercises. The adjective *dzogchen* indicates the goal of a lineage of practitioners, but may not pertain to the definition of meditation as given above. The analysis of consummate *dzogchen* meditation is a description of the enlightened mind from the standpoint of perfect awareness, pure presence (*rikpa*), and it remains unutterable.

Action as the Path

The Dzogchen yogin is first of all a shape-shifter. No outer or inner form expresses his secret nature, which is emptiness, more than any other; no one specific form of practice is correct practice; and no one outer form of conduct can be adopted as a universal method of service to sentient beings over any other. Insofar as each situation demands a unique form of response and expression, the Dzogchen yogin is a chameleon. Just as the chameleon naturally and spontaneously changes color as the chemistry of response works in his body, so the yogin changes his *mudra* (gesture, posture) and *mantra* (spoken word) as the bodhichitta of compassion floods his being at the inception of each new human situation in his sense fields. The entire gamut of emotivity, intellectual stance, and social role comprise his wardrobe; he is as much at home in the temple as in a brothel; and his friends may be found as well among thieves as courtiers. Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, the Dzogchen yogin can manifest in any form in any milieu.

However, until he has reached the end of the path, there are certain inner modes that the Dzogchen yogin may find more expedient than others. After all, the bodhisattva vow is an unsleeping master, and some social roles virtually preclude loving one's neighbor on an overt level. So before the drawing of breath also becomes fulfillment of the vow, it may be expedient to seek situations where altruistic aspiration has free play. Later, when the bodhichitta

arises spontaneously in a constant stream, when transcendent compassion is an integral part of every moment of pure sense perception, the Dzogchen yogin can manifest only as a bodhisattva. Thus the compassionate nature of the Dzogchen yogin's vision and his consequent activity is not systematically cultivated. Rather, compassion is the goal itself under a different name, and having achieved the goal, nothing that can be done is free from compassionate motivation. As Shabkar Lama says in his *Flight of the Garuda* (Song 16), 'Coincident with the development of a happy, glowing, thought free samadhi is the birth of authentic compassion, which is like the love a mother holds for her only son... This compassion is a very special feature of Dzogchen vision.'

Whatever his outer form, the Dzogchenpa is always a yogin, and the yoga he practices is *atiyoga* (sustaining pure presence). Any other technique, from simple callisthenics to manipulation of the vital breath with mantra and visualization, is used as required. The Dzogchen yogin's cave is the cave of emptiness, where Kuntuzangpo, the Primordial Buddha, sits in eternal meditation. In the realm of radiance and vibration he is the *yidam* buddha-deity, his bone ornaments the five passions (desire, hatred, stupidity, pride and jealousy) recognized as the five aspects of primal awareness. In the realm of compassionate reflexive action he is Guru Rinpoche; his vajra-scepter, unfailing compassion; and his bell, penetrating insight into the nature of all situations as emptiness; and so forth.

However, in Himalayan Asia many renunciate yogins skilled in yogas besides *atiyoga* are Dzogchen practitioners. My first and most loving Dzogchen teacher was a Khampa yogin, Jortrala, who lived near Darjeeling as his patron's house-priest, wearing the hair knot, and demonstrating a traditional disregard for personal appearance. Tibetan yogins rarely went naked or wore the single piece of cotton cloth unless they were practicing *tumo*, heat yoga, on the snow line. So, the Dzogchen yogin may also be a priest, and insofar as many great Lamas of Tibetan refugee society are priests as well as Dzogchen yogins, the impression is rife that Dzogchen is essentially a monopoly of the hierarchical priesthood of tulkus. Such an impression is false. Many of the great Lamas of Tibetan refugee society, including the Dalai Lama and of course many of the Nyingma school Lamas, are Dzogchen yogins, but they all would vie to disavow any superiority in Dzogchen over its humblest mendicant practitioner. The role of priest may actually work against progress in Dzogchen, since the tendency to identify the absolute with the sacred, as against the profane, is sometimes present in the priest's work.

Another role expedient in the practice of Dzogchen is that of healer. If healing is essentially a re-imposition of balance and detachment, the Dzogchen yogin who stands identified with the empty awareness and compassion that transcend all sickness (and health) is in a position to transfer the energy and love required to reimpose equilibrium within the patient's unbalanced psycho-organism. Skill in the science of energy-flows in mental, neural, and Hemal spheres, in pharmacology and posology, etc., assists the healer's essentially psychosomatic

art. A healer may not always be a Dzogchen yogin, but a Dzogchen yogin always has the capacity to heal.

To those ignorant of psychosomatics—and semantics—healing can appear to be magic, and indeed the Dzogchen yogin is always a magician in many senses of the word. The magic of shape-shifting and healing has already been mentioned. The magic of the mahasiddhas, such as materialization, walking through rock, speed-walking, alchemical preparation of the elixir of deathlessness, raising the dead, and so forth (ambiguous statements that must be interpreted on two levels) is attained at the end of the path. The most important magic, the enchantment that is indicative of the supreme siddhi's accomplishment, is nondual awareness of the moment-to-moment spontaneous manifestation of the grand sensory illusion that is mahamudra. Then besides those powers, called *siddhi*, the Dzogchen yogin has minor powers like extrasensory perception and ability to manipulate 'external' phenomena—psychokinesis—that are termed *rddhi*. There is no inducement to explain the nature of these powers to the skeptically inclined. The sceptic must make the commitment himself and discover experientially the nature of 'magic'.

The Dzogchen yogin, however, is not at all a puritan. No vow inhibits him from sensual indulgence or intellectual creativity. No action of body, speech, or mind is forbidden him, and his sainthood is attained by means other than conformity to moral laws. Detachment from every situation and compassion for every sentient being without exception are the signs of his achievement. Again, detachment is not to be understood as distant diffidence or dispassionate indifference. The scriptural definition molds the word as 'without identification with or separation from.' The actor, the action, and the acted upon are a clear and delightful unitary perception about which the perceiver has an unequivocal attitude of detachment. This prevents involuntary involvement and permits the spontaneous motivating thrust of compassion to determine the tone communicated. The unbroken stream of compassionate detachment is the attitude that outsiders see as sainthood, if the result of the action is perceived as virtuous. To the Dzogchen yogin both socially acceptable and nonconventional acts are equally valid means of transmitting joy and awareness. If his karma is so pure that his activity is restricted to conventional virtue, then he will not only be a saint in the Mahayana sense but to christian perception as well. From the Dzogchen standpoint his continuous, compassionate awareness is his great achievement.

The Dzogchen yogin in any culture is a traveler, a voyager in psychic spaces. In Western civilization, where adventure to alien shores, with or without weapons, has always absorbed the inclination to delve into the unknown, the age of terrestrial exploration is over. There is nothing left to explore but inner and outer space. The 20th century saw a radical intensification of interest in the human mind, and particularly to maps of the psyche drawn by Asians, whose introversive aspirations have been given maximal social support for millennia.

The Dzogchen explorer faces the most dangerous path and the most rewarding goal. So the predicament of a lone space voyager faced by hostile, disembodied foes on a distant planet may be applied as an analogue germane to the neophyte's career. The Dzogchen yogin's milieu is like space because there is nothing substantial in his universe; there are no concrete points of reference to guide him, no infallible dogma to give his intellect structure or support, and no systematic metaphysical charts to steer him. As in space, there is no upside, downside, center, or circumference to his mandala, and there is no spiritual gravity to pull him down to earth should he fall. The space voyager's fear of the vast immensity that is his environment is similar to the Dzogchen yogin's apprehensive consciousness floating in the endless expanse of inner space. A voyager or explorer he certainly is, because he left all known mental and spiritual territory behind him when he committed himself to his SAMAYAs, allowing himself to be guided by his spontaneous response to the needs of all sentient beings and the constant imperative to maintain full awareness. He is alone because no matter how close he is to family or Dharma friends, and regardless of the density of other beings around him, he must always take complete responsibility for his own actions and accept the karma of others as if it were his own. At the same time he refuses every offer of complicity and the companionship that shares karmic effect.

The illusion of hostility is a common ambience in which the lone-traveling novice on the path finds himself until he learns how to become invisible and how to transform negative elements into friendly aids on the way. Since public morality must remain subservient to the imperatives that keep his SAMAYA intact, if any vicious, socially unacceptable propensities remain, inevitably he will find himself an outsider in the time-honored tradition of the sadhu and mystic. This may entail living an alternative, or perhaps deviant, lifestyle on the fringes of society, forever the scapegoat for the guilty moralist and the self-motivated critic demanding a homogenous and conformist society. Listen to the Western-educated Indian unload his guilt upon the poor Hindu sadhu! Even if his socially negative karmas have been exhausted in past lives, regardless of the success of the shape-shifting stratagems that give him the appearance of conformity, the divergences in the form of the yogin's inner space set him apart. This leaves him open to the paranoias that beset lone individualists. His realization, which maintenance of SAMAYA inevitably brings, elevates him above the level where hostile forces are embodied and seen as hostile men and women. He lives in a world of spiritual powers or psychological forces where it is imperative that a mirrorlike clarity of mind is maintained, the better to identify and transfix the enemy.

The Dzogchen yogin is also a warrior. This is not a traditional concept in any buddhist sect of any country (except perhaps Japan), but if the use of such a concept as the spiritual warrior serves to elucidate the Dharma and attract the warrior's mind to the path, then its use is justified. Certainly, on any level of

Buddhism other than the inner tantra the concept would be inimical to the basic precept of *ahimsa* (nonviolence); but in the inner tantra it has some validity. In the past it was not thought irregular in Hindu Tantra that sadhus should be formed into a fighting force, and indeed specific sadhu orders became the martial protectors of *sanatanam dharam* in the face of Muslim aggression. There is little scope for such crass literality of interpretation in the buddhist Tantra, and certainly for the Dzogchen yogin conflict, war, killing, and slaughter occur only on a metaphysical plain. The Dzogchen warrior is armed with two highly efficacious weapons, and he maintains some important allies. His principal weapons are the *phurba* dagger and *khatvanga* trident.

The *phurba* is a vajra-scepter with the blade of a dagger at one end. The *ngakpa*, the Tibetan Dzogchen warrior, dressed in the garb demanded by such a highly ritualized society, carries a symbolic *phurba* in his belt, the blades never sharpened, the point as dull as a dog's hind leg. The function of the *phurba* is to transfix demons and spirits, liberating them into the space that is their essence. The vajra (*dorje*) represents emptiness and awareness, and it is the Dzogchen yogin's penetrating insight into the nature of all things as emptiness that is represented by the point of the dagger. The master's enemies are delusive emotional poisons and thoughtforms, neuroses, and complexes, generated by a dark corner remaining in his own mind or created by another being's ignorant mind. They are psychological functions that appear to have lives of their own to the extent that superstitious human beings propitiate them both ritually and in the course of their daily life and communication with others. Struck by a *phurba* they dissolve into nothingness, while the minds that possessed them, having experienced a taste of the emptiness that liberated the spirit, are freed in catharsis.

A synonym of these spiritual forces that are the yogin's enemies is the evocatively onomatopoeic Tibetan word *gek*, which means literally 'obstacle', 'hindrance', or 'obstruction'. In both ritual observance and meditation the yogin devotes considerable time to exercises invoking and destroying *geks*, so that during the periods between meditation he can spontaneously effect the destruction of whatever obstacles of this nature arise in his path. *Geks* arise, complete their pernicious tasks, and vanish with the speed of a changing thoughtform, and there is no time for considered thought and action. Certainly, *geks* are mainly of diminutive size, and mere sight of the *phurba* or vajra (*dorje*) is sufficient to dissolve them. But similar psychological phenomena can possess an individual to the extent that an observer is convinced that the being possessed and the spirit are one, and this perception, by society at large or by even the afflicted being's close friends, can doom the sufferer to the asylum.

It is the Dzogchen bodhisattva's role to exorcise such spirits: his kind alone in society possesses the skillful means. When the nature of the demon or complex is relatively benign but resides continuously in a fragment of the psyche of a person who refuses to acknowledge its presence, it may be the duty of the

Dzogchen yogin gently to bring the possessed individual to the recognition that is the prelude to liberation of the spirit. When the spirit is hostile, and the proximity of the insight that can destroy it excites it and its host to aggressive behavior toward the bearer of the awareness, the Dzogchen yogin—the warrior—is forced to engage the enemy with its host as its protector and agent. In such a situation the danger to the Dzogchen yogin lies in the tendency to forget that the host is the sufferer and a victim and so become negatively attached to his own aggression—to take it personally, as we say—thus becoming impotent to exorcise the spirit.

The liberation of spirits is a function of the Dzogchen yogin as exorcist as much as warrior. It must be stressed that although the warrior distinguishes between friend and foe, his attitude toward them both is determined by the same compassion. The compassion toward a friend implies application of a different form of skillful means, but the motivation is identical. Another way of saying it is that the wrathful face that the Dzogchen yogin turns toward hostile beings or spirits is as compassionate as the peaceful mien he shows his friends. The detachment that is neither identification nor separation is the key to this conundrum. So exorcist is no mean label; it implies the fully detached skill and compassion of the Dzogchen yogin.

The life stories of the great guru, Guru Rinpoche, are replete with accounts of his successful liberation of petty spirits and his subjugation of gods and demons that would serve the Dharma as guardians and allies. The monk and abbot Shantarakshita, invited by King Trisong Detsen to ordain the first Tibetan monks and build a monastery, was unable to suppress the *naga* serpents and *yaksha* elementals that possessed the ground and building materials. Guru Rinpoche, the warrior-sadhu, subjugated the myriad Tibetan gods and demons as well as their Bonpo shaman devotees whom he encountered as he approached Samye from Nepal before clearing the area around Samye of all aggressive forces. Afterward he visited all the major mountains in Tibet to suppress the powerful mountain gods, and he also made pilgrimage to the lakes wherein dwelt the life spirits of the country (*latso*). The victorious Indian sadhu traveling alone in the vast empty spaces and treacherous mountains of the Tibetan plateau among nomadic Mongol shamans of an aggressive disposition (these same people were then the conquerors of the whole of central Asia) presents the archetypal image of the Dzogchen warrior and exorcist. The ngakpas have maintained the tradition of mendicant buddhist shamanism Tibet. Since the time of Guru Rinpoche the Tibetans have relied upon the mantric powers of the exorcist to protect them from external danger. Such reliance may not always effect the defeat of an invading army, but it can leave the defenders morally victorious and spiritually unbowed.

The *phurba* is the Dzogchen yogin's weapon against his enemies, while the *khatvanga* is his weapon against his own ego. The Tibetan Buddhist *khatvanga* consists of a trident (*trishul*), the three-pronged fork carried by Shaiva

sadhus in India and by the Greek god Poseidon, that pierces the center of a double-vajra on a horizontal plane; a 'vase of eternal youth' filled with the elixir of immortality; and three human heads below the three prongs. The double-dorje, or crossed-vajras, is the emblem of the karma family (at the northern direction of the mandala), signifying perfect action accomplished spontaneously for all sentient beings. The trident itself by its form indicates the unity of the trinity. The trinity is the three existential modes of the Buddha—*dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*—and the unity is the Buddha himself, sometimes expressed as a fourth 'body' or mode, the *svabhavikakaya*, or the unity of form and emptiness. The three correspond to secret, inner, and outer planes of being, and also to ignorance, aversion, and desire (although the last two may be transposed circumstantially). Thus the three transfigured heads—the first a blue skull, the second a white dry head, and the third a red head dripping with blood—represent the Dzogchen yogin's recognition of ignorance and sloth, aversion and hatred, and desire and lust as the three modes of buddha-being. It is the khatvanga of emptiness that pierces the nature of the three principal obstacles to clarity and awareness and transforms them into the primal awareness, radiant clarity, and all-embracing compassion of the Buddha's being. Further, it is interesting to note, when Guru Rinpoche was attending Trisong Detsen's court while his consort, the princess Yeshe Tsogyel, was banished, the khatvanga was the form into which the Guru transformed her so that he should always have her with him. Thus the khatvanga of emptiness and primal awareness is the Dzogchen yogin's consort, as well as his most potent weapon. In the warrior's perpetual battle to penetrate every obstacle to his enlightenment with emptiness, he has this consort as his constant support.

Transformation, as alteration from an inferior to a superior status, from ignorance to knowledge, and so forth, is not a concept consonant with Dzogchen atiyoga. The reason is that all things from the very beginning are pure and complete in the universal ground of being. *Recognition* is the term germane to description of the awakening process of the Dzogchen yogin. Thus the five poisons are not to be transformed. They are to be recognized for what they are and what they have always been: the five aspects of primal awareness. Furthermore, recognition is achieved by withdrawing consciousness from the stressful mental functions of dualization, relaxing into the original nature of the mind, and getting behind the mindscape so full of objects of potential attachment. If he does not fall into an effective pattern of meditation drawn by the instinct that constantly directs him toward maturing experience, there are various techniques that the Dzogchen neophyte may be taught by his Lama to assist recognition of his emotions as aspects of awareness. The recognition can be affected in meditation in the crucible of the mind by provoking emotion and then penetrating its emptiness with the insight that has been developed in insight meditation (see Song 14).

A more direct and forcible method is through the practice of *chod* (Song 17). Here the yogin repairs to a desolate and fearsome power place, such as a charnel ground or the habitation of ferocious demons such as flesh eaters, spirits of disease, malicious dakinis, and so forth. Then preparing his mind with mantra and music, identifying with the Yidam, he invites the spirits to attack him. The four demon spirits (demons of embodiment, passion, divine pride and death) are those specifically invoked in the tradition of Machik Labdron, an 11th century Tibetan yogini who established the principal *chod* lineage in Tibet.

Machik practiced sexual yoga, and these four demons, particularly, of course, the devil of emotional passion, are the bane of highly sexed yogins. But through exercise in this yoga, the yogin or yogini is rendered safe when he or she must spontaneously respond to the demons evoked in a passionate relationship conducted in the course of *sadhana*. Practitioners of this technique are frequently psychologically and physically mauled, but the greatest warriors of *chod* become adept in the transformation (recognition or release) of every emotional and spiritual force. Particularly, since the transformation of spirits of disease implies a self-cure, *chod-pas* become immune to illness and learn the art of healing in the process.

The Lama will emphasize the folly of evoking passion in the mainstream of life, no matter what altruistic motive inspires the bodhisattva neophyte, until one of the practices of cutting attachment described above, or a similar yoga, has been successfully accomplished. In the initial phase of practice, probably the period immediately following discovery of a Lama, it is most advantageous to spend time in retreat, or better still, as a monk or nun in retreat. In such a space a solid foundation can be laid, beneficial habits can be developed, and the mind can be established in the purity affected by the initiation received from the Lama. Most of us must practice no-meditation and no-action in the form of simple purificatory techniques.

Further down the path, in freedom from expectation of results, we can assimilate the whole of life's potential into our practice. Intense intimacy, emotional harmony and trust, and spiritual attunement can be developed to an optimal degree in a passionate, sensually interactive relationship, which thus provides one of the most effective situations in which to practice and learn. No better occasion may arise to develop the bodhisattva's responsiveness. The cynic may laugh because the primary universal motivation, sexual pleasure, which he considers all in all to all, including the Dzogchen bodhisattva, is not given primacy here. Of course, sexual desire is the starting point. The sexual center is the seat of our vital energy at the seat of the spine and of *kundalini* herself, and the more intense, sustained, and objectless is sexual desire the better. But what must be simultaneous with the arousal of desire is the penetrating insight into desire as emptiness; and the motivation that springs from empty awareness of desire is the bodhisattva's aspiration of selfless service. The pure pleasure, *dewachenpo*, *mahasukha*, that is to be found within

sexual interaction—which is indeed found if the adept’s yoga has been effective and negative karma is not to be gleaned from the encounter—is the inevitable fruit of all our labor; but pleasure must never be the conscious motivation. If this moment is to be prostituted to the next, if a relationship is motivated from the beginning by a selfish desire, if lust is not recognized as emptiness and attachment not destroyed, then the seeds of disaster are sown. Although some physical pleasure is obtained, the result of the relationship may be a break in samaya and a seeming eternity in the vajra-hell (*dorje nyelwa, vajra-narak*). Retribution can take the most violent and sadistic forms; and the negative propensity to repeat the experience, despite the retribution, will become increasingly hard to resist, until a downward spiral destroys all hope of even a human rebirth, let alone a rainbow body. Craving for *mahasukha, dewachenpo*, pure pleasure, kills all chance of attaining it. The yogin enters a sexual encounter without any hopes or fear, simply enjoying the play of magical illusion, allowing the ramifications of spontaneity to manifest for the sake of all sentient beings.

Nonaction is the key to existential involvement in all passionate situations—a sexual encounter, an angry interaction, a proud stance in competition, or a jealous rivalry. The apparent illogicality of the progression of passionate mental events in the karmic stream is reflected in the superficially structureless nature of the course of the adept’s life. When the starting point is a turning around in the seat of consciousness and commitment to the ultimate Dzogchen SAMAYA, and the goal is a rainbow body, no systematic path exists. At the starting point, when no doubt the aspirant will first experience the spontaneously arising dictates of responsiveness, karmic cause and effect will still be operative. Even initiation will not necessarily destroy the habits of a lifetime or be changed by an immutable conviction that there is a higher vision. So, at the beginning of the path, motivation will be mixed with nonmotivation. Confusion may arise as periods of unsatisfactory horizontal, karmically determined acts will seem to dominate the moments of eternal, resuscitating, vertical effusion that seemingly are few and far between.

The Goal

Insofar as buddhahood is inexpressible and inconceivable, it would be best to omit any verbal comment upon it. However the following epigrams, stated or implied in the foregoing commentary, have been useful to me as *koans*—verbal paradoxes—that point directly at the goal. ‘Only a buddha can recognize a buddha’. ‘The Lama is every moment of perception: all vision is his body, all sound is his speech, and all pure awareness is his mind.’ ‘Nothing exists that is not a function of mind.’ ‘Nothing is evil or undesirable but evil thought makes it so (*boni soit qui mal y pense*).’ ‘The starting point is the path is the goal.’

Dzogchen Jargon

If at the beginning there is a viable basis of understanding between Lama and

disciple on a nonverbal level, still there may be many problems of communication in the conceptual realm. The notion of secrecy can be one such stumbling block. The 'secret' or 'mystic' dimension is the third in a triadic hierarchy of categories completed by the 'outer' and 'inner' dimensions. These categories define the relationship between *hinayana*, *prajñāparamitayana* and *tantrayana*, for example. In metaphysical analysis they classify, for instance, buddha-body, buddha-speech, and buddha-mind and the three modes or bodies of buddha-being: *nirmanakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, and *dharmakaya*. In Tantra, what pertains to the secret or mystic dimension remains forever secret in the same way that subatomic particles remain hidden from sensory perception. It is impossible to divulge buddha-mind, or the dharmakaya, outside its own frame of reference.

However, in Tantra there are injunctions against the initiate revealing the Guru's precepts transmitted at the time of initiation. It may be destructive to the faith and comprehension of the initiate on a different level of practice if he is regaled with precepts irrelevant to his mindstate. For the noninitiate who may be sympathetic to the teaching, it is futile and perhaps destructive to inform his mind with a structure that is significant only after initiation has provided a framework. Last, although no harm can be done to the ultimate truth of Tantra, there is the danger of an outsider, either through honest miscomprehension or through devious twisting of meaning and rearrangement of context, representing what is sublime and intelligent as something vulgar and stupid. At worst this can provoke persecution of initiates, or it can create prejudice and partiality in social consciousness. However, the most important reason for keeping the Guru's precepts secret is to maintain the yogin's integrity during the process of realization: exposure of samayas outside heart secrecy will inevitably introduce obstacles to their fulfillment.

The *initiate* in the above context refers to an individual who has experiential knowledge of the goal of Tantra. The *outsider* is a person with blinkered vision unable or unready to enter the path, whose spiritual development is limited by mindsets and beliefs labeled as *hedonistic*, *realistic*, *nihilistic* or *eternalistic*. Thus an individual who has had mere formal initiation into the tradition may in fact have a noninitiate's vision and may be negatively influenced by secret revelations. On the contrary, the individual who receives initiation spontaneously and informally outside a practice lineage may gain enormous benefit from fortuitously obtained 'secrets'. In general, regarding the propagation of Dzogchen instruction outside the framework of a Guru-disciple relationship, in the light of the inscrutable level of forever-secret, mystic realities, and insofar as the current social climate is sympathetic to nondual traditions, most contemporary Dzogchen Lamas teach and actively support the public dissemination of their lineages' truths.

This discussion of secrecy has introduced the secret or mystic dimension. In the context of the highest, inner tantra (*anuttarayogatantra*) Dzogchen, or *atiyoga*, is

the secret level, *anyu* the inner level, and *mahayoga* the outer level. Dzogchen's secrecy is a corollary of its ineffable nature, and, therefore, the adjectives that describe the state of being that is Dzogchen are strained to capture its ambience. In fact, there is little compromise with the statement that the goal is beyond the intellect to comprehend—it is inexpressible. Adjectives employed to evoke this inexpressible existential condition are indicators of the direction in which the yogin must go to attain it. 'Naked, stripped, stark'; 'direct, immediate, here and now'; and 'natural, simple, pure, uncontrived, unelaborated' are three strings of them. These words indicate the lack of any conceptual screen between the yogin and his experience, the absence of any judgment about the elements of the situation that confront him, and the absence of preconceptions about the nature of reality in general. Any discursive mental activity obscures pure perception. However, all these statements are examples of the glib, devaluations that the precept enjoining the yogin to abhor such attempts at rationalization aim at precluding. This point is made here in order to stress that the language of the path is structured with intention to induce transcendence of itself, which is an aspect of the goal.

There is little new in the metaphysical concepts of Dzogchen to the student of Mahayana philosophy. One of the best and most accessible source through which an understanding of the basic concepts of Dzogchen can be obtained is Saraha's *dohas*. Although the concepts are identical, the terminology is different, and the patterns and the angle on the patterns—the way in which aspects are related to create a dynamic and a path—are different. Despite the differences, Saraha demonstrates not only the experiential proximity of the *mahamudra siddhas* of the Ganges Valley to the Dzogchen siddhas of north-western India and Tibet, but also the transcultural nature of nondual experience.

In this analysis the traditional structure inevitably formulated as stages of the path is avoided. The nature of the traditional form is inevitable because the structure and its parts gain meaning only in the light of Dzogchen's liberating, soteriological dynamic, the forward drive from ignorance to awareness, from obscurity to light. This continuous awakening progresses along a path of meditation that becomes increasingly formless and inexpressible as experience more and more approximates the ultimate ineffable goal. The analysis by stages with its implication of linear temporal development has its limitation in that the Dzogchen dynamic operates outside time in a field of synchronicity. However, divorced from the graduated structure, Dzogchen terms tend to become dead counters in a futile, spiritually obstructive semantic game, for they describe mystic experience that cannot be exposed to the common light of day without devaluation and dilution of meaning. Nevertheless, this is an attempt to describe Dzogchen terms in a continuing effort to find English equivalents, with enriching connotations drawn from the Western tradition. Not that Dzogchen terminology is metaphysically abstruse. The terms that in the context of a Dzogchen song or liturgy are so evocative of the states they represent are

found to be prosaic when extracted from their context. *Space, light, and awareness* are the three basic concepts most frequently employed in Dzogchen texts.

The mental activity alienating human beings from immediate, direct experience is referred to frequently in Dzogchen texts as the dualizing function of the mind. First, separation is made between subject and object, the perceiver identifying himself with an egoic consciousness that perceives an isolated, external other. Introversively, in the same way, he alienates himself from aspects of his own being. With a basis in this fundamental dualistic structure, verbal expression gains its meanings from abstract linguistic relationships. In dualistic philosophies, where ignorance is rationalized as an acceptable norm or idealized for the purpose of manipulating an objective reality, valid meaning can be discovered only in the sphere of relativity, in the sphere of objective duality. This statement is framed in the law of the excluded middle. Dzogchen insists unequivocally that on the path of nondual awareness, meanings informed outside the excluded middle are spurious and deviant and that reliance upon such meanings exacerbates the painful alienation associated with continuous transmigration.

What the excluded middle represents in Dzogchen is described analogically by the mandala (pronounced *māṇḍala*). Consider the meaning of nonduality in terms of this mandala. The excluded middle is the nondual space wherein direct, immediate perception is experienced: in a moment of pure perception there is no distinction between the sensory object, the sense organ, and the consciousness that is aware of sensation. Since the consciousness of the psycho-organism is capable of only serial, linear perception (although a subconscious strata constantly synthesizes the streams of data produced by all five senses), when there is full concentration at the door of one specific sense the mental commentary of 'the observer' is silenced for a moment. So, in such direct sensory perception, there is intimation of nondual experience. In the next moment this experience becomes less than perfect if the perceiver's clarity of awareness is clouded by either emotivity provoked by the sense object or by mental interference. The mental veil may here be defined as the (muted) chatter of mental apparatus engaged in the preparation of a linguistic definition of the perception. Even at the moment of direct perception when nondual awareness of emptiness as form and form as emptiness is experienced, the mind is preparing to dualize the situation. Only when there is no emotional attachment to the object of perception and when the mind is still, emptied of all discursive thought, can a legitimate paradigm of nondual, direct perception obtain. The center of the mandala represents the emptiness of the perceptual situation—there is no substantial essence in subject, object, or their interaction. The field of the mandala represents the form—visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, gustatory, or, indeed, mental. Emptiness and form comprise a unity in the same way that the center and circumference of the circle are inseparable. The indivisible relationship between such polarities is called nondual, and

ramifications of this unity that may not be evident are both the beauty of Dzogchen expression and our linguistic hurdle when approaching these texts.

How is this nondual direct sensory experience verbally articulated? Evidently it is not to be done in the manner of ignorant, dualistic expression. But it has to be done with the same vocabulary and grammar. The sacred languages of Tibetan and Sanskrit provide vocabularies sanctified by scripture and the poetry of the adepts of secret cults. The profane language of commerce and science is ill-suited to adaptation to this purpose, although science is increasingly able to provide terminology that compensates for its lack of poetic beauty by a precision of abstract concept. Some commentators retain Tibetan or Sanskrit terms, and some use the typographical device of capitalizing the initial letters of prosaic words to imply a higher order of meaning. Certainly, insofar as grammar and patterns of meanings reflect mind's intrinsic psychological structure, its habits of perception, and its levels of awareness, the Dzogchen vision would ideally require a new form of language. As an increasing number of English-speaking Dzogchen adepts intuitively adapt the material at hand, this language will evolve.

The sacred language of the tantras is mantra. This means that the syllables that comprise a word resonate to a pitch that evokes the prototypical nature of the form that is being articulated. When the master is questioned on this point, he is evasive regarding the specific relationship between sound and form. But there is no ignoring his conviction that sound is intimately related to the realm of form and has the power to affect it. The Indian story of one of the great *ustad* sitarists of an earlier generation, whose instrument burst into flame during a perfect rendition of a fire *raga*, is explained in terms of the *ustad*'s ability to reproduce the sound of the seed-syllable of the element fire precisely, so creating fire itself. However, it is a general principle in many sacred traditions that it is not so much the form of the consonants as the power and thoughtform inserted into the vowel sound by a master, a *siddha*, that is efficacious. That the resonance that vibrates in an inanimate object, such as a fine wine glass, a conch shell, or a singing bowl, is of the nature of vowels rather than consonants supports this notion. Meditative experience indicates that the sacred language of Dzogchen is effective in inducing the states of mind that are evoked. It is imperative that we take great care in selecting the equivalents of these terms in English. Frequently the need to render the form of a meaning exactly takes precedence over aesthetic demands.

A definition of one radical Dzogchen term—nonduality—has already been offered. The paradox of expressing the nondual in dualistic terms is parallel to experience of the relative world in a nondual mode. The next term to be discussed is the synonym of nonduality that indicates that nonduality encompasses duality and that we know nonduality only through a specific mode of awareness that unites polarities and gives the relative world a unity. This term is literally translated as 'two-in-oneness', 'coincidence', or 'arising as a pair' (*zung*

'jug yuganaddha) Since absolute nondual reality itself—emptiness—pervades the relative world and does not exist independent of it, the coincident pair of space and awareness (pure presence) is given as the primary level of reality. *Space* is best conceived as the universal, all-pervasive field. Like emptiness itself, it is nothing separate from form, and yet nothing else but it exists. All form is space: thus it is possible for siddhas who have dissolved the constituents of their body-mind in space, identifying with it, to walk through walls and eat rock. Space is no cold, vacuous void. It is the richness of the goddess Mahamaya, and all the playfulness and energy of the Dakini. *Pure presence (rikpa)* is an epistemological synonym of emptiness and the cognitive aspect of space. Again, since the epistemological absolute cannot exist independent of its formal constituent, it is not separate from the sensory fields that constitute ordinary knowledge.

The final attribute of emptiness to be mentioned is a quality peculiar to the buddhist analysis: *responsiveness*. It is the third and final denominator in the list of categories or aspects by which emptiness can be defined: *essence, nature, responsiveness (ngo bo, rang bzhin, thugs rje)*. It appears anomalous, an attribute rather than a category. The third logical category is function, or manifest function, and the attribute found in its stead is responsiveness and its qualifier is all pervasive (*kun khyab*). Viewed as a functional attribute of inner space, pure presence, and light, the implication is that the dynamic, the intentionality, the purpose of being is compassion, which is a synonym of responsiveness and demonstrable as the responsive aspect of love. It is this *compassion* that is coextensive with space, the buddha-heart pervading all beings. Viewed as the potential form or manifestation of emptiness, the implication appears to be that every vibration of body, speech, and mind is a form of compassionate energy, nothing excluded. Consider the distinction between responsiveness and compassion. In Dzogchen, compassion is much more than the virtue of loving-kindness (*byams pa, maitri*). Nor does the word *compassion* in the Dzogchen context denote its English etymological meaning, 'suffering together' or 'empathy', although both these meanings may be inferred. Essentially, compassion indicates an open and receptive mind responding spontaneously to the exigencies of an ever-changing field of vibration to sustain the optimal awareness that serves self-and-others' ultimate desire for liberation and well-being. The conventional meaning of compassion denotes the latter, active part of this definition, and, due to the accretions of christian connotation in the West, 'response' is limited to specifically virtuous activity. Responsiveness defines the origin and cause of selfless activity that can encompass all manner of response. On this nondual Dzogchen path, virtue is the effect, not the cause; the ultimate compassionate response is whatever action optimizes pure presence—loving-kindness is the automatic function of primal awareness.

Pure presence (*rikpa*) is probably the single most significant term in Dzogchen, and it is peculiar to Dzogchen. It is found in the dohas of the mahamudra siddhas, but generally the term pure awareness is preferred there, where it is

used as a synonym of pure presence. In Dzogchen the phrase ‘primal awareness of pure presence’ (*rig pa'i ye shes*) indicates both the objective and subjective aspects of emptiness as the universe (or *dharmadhātu*) in terms of nondual awareness. Since sensory consciousness is constantly active, the movement of this primal awareness of pure presence is referred to figuratively as a dance, and since it is represented figuratively and anthropomorphically as the dakini, the movement within presence is called ‘the dance of the dakini’. It would be incorrect to characterize the primal awareness of pure presence as inherently active, as it is essentially a field coextensive with inner space. Perhaps the best image to describe it is the whirling firebrand: in darkness the actuator remains invisible, while the whirling flame on the end of the stick creates the impression of a static wheel of fire. Fire is symbolic of dynamic cognition.

If inner space (*dbying*, *dhātu*) and primal awareness (*ye shes*, *jñāna*) are the coincident pair that form the empty essence of reality, the nature of that reality is light (*gsal ba*, *prabhava*). Again, this light is coextensive with emptiness, inner space, and pure presence, and insofar as it is inseparable from its forms in the same way that the light of the sun is inseparable from its source, it is best conceived as a field of lightform in potential. It is for this reason that *selwa* can be translated as ‘luminosity’ and ‘clarity’. *Luminosity* is intended to indicate the abstract quality of light before its emanation, and *clarity* indicates the inherent quality of lightform. Although the image of the sun and its beams adequately conveys the relationship between light and its manifest qualities, the image fails insofar as the sun is apparently a substantial entity, whereas the source of lightform is empty space.

The terms defined above are all synonyms of emptiness and aspects of emptiness like facets of a jewel. If reality is all creation, then just as the universe, the cosmos, all things under the sun, and the totality give inclusive definitions, so do *emptiness*, *space*, *light*, *pure presence*, and *responsiveness*—they are simply different names for the same ineffable reality. Each indicates a different aspect useful in developing a vision of the path and expressing experience along it. To the yogin they are sacred and secret words that should never be bandied about in idle metaphysical gossip lest the power to evoke their reality is lost. The reality they evoke is to be considered more precious and more worthy of respect than any particular god; the power these words represent is more potent than nuclear fission and more subtly efficacious than all the miracles of the siddhas. They describe the ultimate mode of being, the ultimate buddha-body, the *dharmakaya*. There is nothing but the dharmakaya as the Dzogchen master, and the paradox, which in itself is a powerful Dzogchen koan, is that the Dzogchen master appears as an ordinary human being, and his immediate environment, his mandala, has the same form as our own.

Endnotes

- ¹ See Patrul Rinpoche, 'The Three Incisive Precepts' in *The Flight of the Garuda* p. 181 (Keith Dowman, Wisdom Pub., Boston 2003).
- ² From Shri Singha, Bairotsana first received the five Mind Series transmissions, (*snga 'gyur lnga*) and then the Space Series transmissions
- ³ This account of Vairochana is derived from various, sometimes conflicting sources. One significant variation is the location of Bairotsana's encounter with Shri Singha, which is given as Vajrasana (Bodhi Gaya) in some sources, most particularly the *Bairo 'dra 'bag* (Yudra Nyingpo. *The Great Image: The Life Story of Vairochana the Translator*. Trans. Ani Jinba Palmo. Snow Lion, Ithaca, 2004), the standard hagiography of Bairotsana. (See also Norbu and Clemente, *The Supreme Source: The Fundamental Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde*. Snow Lion, Ithaca 1999, 46–56).
- ⁴ *Rikpa* is translated as 'gnosis' in the original publication, a term which generates negative associations in many people.
- ⁵ *Trekecho* and *togal* are translated as 'Breakthrough' and 'Leapover' respectively throughout.
- ⁶ See Khenpo Tenzin Namdak, 'Dark Retreat' transcript, trans. John Reynolds.
- ⁷ 'Relating to mind altering substances': *entheogen* has a Greek root, literally 'becoming divine within'.
- ⁸ See *Everything Is Light*, (Keith Dowman, Dzogchen Now! Books 2012) Appendix1 for a categorization of the mandala.
- ⁹ Alpert and Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience*, 1963, has not been superseded (has it?).
- ¹⁰ *History of the Nyingma*, (Dudjom Rinpoche, Wisdom Pub.1991. p.391ff.
- ¹¹ 'Appearances' in a buddhist context generally refers to generic form, rather than subjective perception.
- ¹² The precept at the end of chapter 75 appears to provide a tentative differentiation of the two: 'Reckoning from below, the cutting through is direct; looking from above, the view is uncrystalizing transparency.'
- ¹³ Forthcoming in 2019.
- ¹⁴ See *Natural Perfection* (Keith Dowman, Wisdom Pub., 2010) p.81.
- ¹⁵ *Gnas lugs mdzod*; see *Natural Perfection* (Keith Dowman, Wisdom Pub., 2010).
- ¹⁶ *The Vajra Essence: Dudjom Lingpa's Visions of the Great perfection: Volume 3* pp.xi-xv (Trans. B. Alan Wallace, Wisdom Pub., 2015.)

Additional Excerpts

Original Perfection

The 'Five Early Translations' are found in *The Collected Tantras of Bairotsana*, a Tibetan compendium that was probably compiled in the 12th century. During the same period they were assimilated to *The Supreme Source*, the encyclopedic Dzogchen Mind Series tantra, which took pride of place as the first text in the ati yoga section of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. This last collection went through various mutations and is our primary source of Dzogchen texts today. The second text in the ati yoga section of *The Collected Tantras of the Ancients* is called *The Ten Sutras*, a commentary on Bairotsana's five transmissions and a rich source of Dzogchen precepts in itself. It is this text that has provided our commentary. It was written by an unknown author, again, probably, in the 12th century.

In the text herein, the lines that introduce each of the transmissions are a synthesis of material taken from *The Supreme Source* and *The Ten Sutras*. The root verses are translations of the best readings we could elicit from the various sources. The commentary on the verses is a paraphrastic translation of *The Ten Sutras'* commentary with explanatory notes interpolated. *The Eternal Victory Banner: The Vast Space of Vajrasattva*, by far the longest of the transmissions, is divided into twenty-seven parts, or 'timeless moments', found in *The Collected Tantras of Bairotsana* edition. The headings to the commentaries to the *Victory Banner* verses are taken from *The Ten Sutras*. The final line of the commentary is a summation of the meaning of the entire verse. The annotation to the text indicates only a few of the discrepancies between the various sources.

Spaciousness

The opportunity to re-edit the text, afforded by publication in America has been eagerly seized. Passing time has brought new insight and new word preferences. Some phrases and sentiments that caused offence to believers in the suppositional buddhist approaches have been eliminated. The cover picture has been changed and the size of the font throughout has been increased. In all, this revised edition constitutes an upgrade.

Yeshe Lama

Note on the Use of the Manual.

Reiterated in the introduction, the *Yeshe Lama* is a manual of Dzogchen practice,

stressing primarily the crucial nonmeditation in the timelessness of the here and now and only secondarily describing the yogas that exercise body, speech and mind. Regarding the latter, different lineages provide slightly different instructions, particularly on the exercises of basic training. It is strongly advised that the Dzogchen initiate follows the instruction of his/her mentor according to the details of the teacher's lineage. It can be counter-productive and negatively affective to alter instruction or mix instructions. Further, the written instructions given here may take on different meanings when interpreted in the light of oral instruction. For this reason it is unwise to attempt practice of the instruction without the advice of a lama or a lineal initiate who has experience in the technique. This manual should be considered an adjunct to oral instruction.

The Great Secret of Mind

A word about the manner of the translation of *The Great Secret of Mind*: In the first place, Tulku Pema Rigtsal wrote this treatise for the East Asian students who requested it. Secondly, it is written for his Tibetan and Nepali monk-students. Thirdly, he had the refugee-youth of Tibet in mind, youth educated in modern institutions who have been alienated by the heavy conservative nature of the tradition in the exile community and may be brought back to sympathy with it by a more modern presentation of the dharma. Fourthly, it has been written for western Buddhists who may be attracted to Dzogchen by its current high media profile and for western students of Dzogchen. In order to accommodate this mixed readership we decided that the intended meaning pointing at the nature of mind should take precedent at every conceivable juncture over the grammatical and linguistic peculiarities of the Tibetan. The translation has thus become a paraphrastic rendition of the original. Furthermore, editing the text while translating it, we have sometimes amended it by addition or subtraction in order to clarify and elucidate the vital meanings for the benefit of one set of readers or another.

Guru Rinpoche Here and Now

The *Zanglingma* was chosen for translation because it is the oldest of the guru-namtars, closest in time to the historical fiction of Padmasambhava. It was revealed in the 12th century during a vital creative period in Tibet when the cult of Guru Rinpoche was flourishing. Further, the text includes only the most significant and relevant of the episodes in Guru Pema's life story, and its fluent prose and verse is easily accessible to Western readers. It is a treasure-text, a *terma*, in the apocryphal language of the tradition, hidden by Padmasambhava to be discovered by one of his tulku-emanations when the time was ripe. The emanation in this case was Nyangrel Nyima Wozar, a poet and literary giant of the 12th century. That treasure-text discovered in the Khamsum Zangling Temple, the Copper Temple of Samye, became known as the *Zanglingma*.

The text of the *Zanglingma* translated herein is included in the *Rinchen Terdzo*, the inclusive compendium of treasure-texts, compiled and edited by Jamyang Khyentse in the 19th century. I am aware of older, significantly different versions of the *Zanglingma* that would bear investigation, presumably texts in currency before Jamgon Kongtrul and company edited what would become the standard version included in the *Rinchen Terdzo*. A microfilm of at least one such older text is held by the NGMCP in Kathmandu.

This translation of the *Zanglingma* was made in Boudhanath, Kathmandu, in 1989, with Bhakha Tulku Pema Rikzin giving a word-by-word rendition into English. Authority to read and study the text was transmitted by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche through the *lung* of the *Rinchen Terdzo*, at Clement Town, Dehra Dun, India, in 1979.

Our translation was in its final stage when I heard that the Nyingma publisher Rangjung Yeshe had completed a translation of the same text and was publishing it imminently. It would have been senseless to have had two translations of the same text published simultaneously, so I moved on to other work. Since then the *Zanglingma* translation file has remained deep within successive laptops. Now, twenty-five years later, seems a propitious moment to share it. The translation of 1989 has been lightly edited and an introduction added. The introduction shows Padmasambhava in a contemporary light making his message more relevant and accessible.

The second part of this publication contains a translation of the *Pema Katang Dueba*, which is a summary of the very extensive *Pema Katang Shedrakma*, *The Lotus Precepts: The Crystal Cave*, a terma discovered by Orgyen Lingpa in the 14th century. A translation of the *Shedrakma* has been available for forty years, but we wait for someone to translate this enormous work with the scholarship and literary style that it deserves. The *Katang Dueba* can be taken as a devotee's mnemonic aid to the original work, which it encapsulates, but more commonly it is used as a devotional liturgy.

My Tibetan copy of the *Katang Dueba* was an old well-used blockprint from Tibet, the text of which was badly corrupted, typical of the texts often found in provincial gompas. Specifically, the personal and place names in the prophecies appear to have been modified to give the predictions local—but less certain—significance. I have used an edited text to correct my translation, but when the edited edition is ambiguous, I have resorted to the original for guidance. No claim can be made that my working sources are identical to the original text written down by Orgyen Lingpa. Further, Orgyen Lingpa's text was written in simple metric verse, which made it easy to chant and remember; my translation is in prose that is easy to understand.

The third part consists of *The Seven Line Prayer* and a unique commentary upon it by one of the great luminaries of the Khampa renaissance of the 19th and 20th centuries, Ju Mipham Namgyel. *The Seven Line Prayer* at first glance appears to

be a simplistic evocation and supplication of Pema Jungné, Guru Rinpoche, but Mipham provides both exoteric and esoteric interpretations of it. The esoteric is divided into four approaches to Guru Rinpoche: the paths of liberation, skillful means, Dzogchen and final achievement. In this way, Mipham manages to pack the entire teaching of the Sacred Word (Guhyamantra) into recitation of the seven lines.

Note on Orthography

Freed by on-line publishing from exploitative commercial publishers' insistence on standardized, sometime idiotic orthography, I have experimented with forms that represent meaning closer to Dzogchen sense. Thus, for instance, where possible I have made 'buddha' into an abstract noun rather than leave it as a mythic personification. Further, I have capitalized only substantive forms of religious denominations: 'Buddhism' and 'Buddhist' for the nouns and 'buddhist' for the adjective; 'Christian' for the noun, 'christian' for the adjective; although 'Dzogchen' for both noun and adjective.

Then with regard to American phonetic rectitude, 'chung' for 'chang', 'wang' for 'wong' and no final 'd' at the end of 'jigme'. Also, the false lisp in rendering the Tibetan aspirated 't' has been abandoned, so that the protector Tanglha, for example, cannot be articulated as a soppy 'Thanglha'. But, in general, I have maintained the aspiration of 'k', and 'p' as 'kh' and 'ph'. There are some exceptions to these rules.

Grammatical composition, surely, is an art rather than a science; prose—like the human spirit—suffers when it is subjected to uncompromising militaristic discipline. Attempting to turn the intuitive creative mind into an automaton (read: 'computer'), publishing houses' rulebooks attempt to force a round peg into a square hole. Freed from the unbending autocracy of the conventional publisher, a tsunami of creativity in grammar and composition can be unleashed.

The Flight of the Garuda

Among the texts in the *Flight, Secret Instruction in a Garland of Vision*, is one of three said to have been written by Padmasambhava, Tibet's great guru, who visited Tibet in the 8th century. It belongs to the lamrim genre, a stage-by-stage description of the path to buddhahood. *The Flight of the Garuda*, written by Shabkar Lama in the 19th century, comprises a series of twenty-three songs composed to inspire and instruct the yogin practicing Dzogchen trekcho meditation. The two shorter versified works are extracts from liturgical 'revealed texts'. *Emptying the Depths of Hell*, revealed by Guru Chowong in the 13th century, provides a Dzogchen confessional liturgy, and *The Wish-Granting Prayer of Kuntuzangpo*, revealed by Rikzin Godemchan in the 14th century as part of an extensive Dzogchen tantra, is a prayer for attainment of the Dzogchen goal.

In the introduction to the book I have attempted to place Dzogchen in a nondogmatic, less abstract, and more human context, by providing a subjective explication of it. Necessarily, Western notions and personal proclivities, needs, and biases have slipped into this interpretation. Insofar as my understanding is imperfect, the result is partial and unorthodox. However, the reader may benefit from this personal commentary if, through inspiration derived from the translations, he fills the gaps, bridges the contradictions, and jumps beyond the verbal inadequacies to a Dzogchen view. But no text or commentary is a substitute for transmission from an exemplar of Dzogchen attainment who demonstrates the Dzogchen path spontaneously and directly.

For my understanding of Dzogchen I have been dependent upon the kindness of many lamas. Kanjur Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche, Jortra Lama, Chatral Rinpoche Sangye Dorje, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, Dodrubchen Rinpoche, Thrinle Norbu Rinpoche, and Taklung Tulku Pema Wangyel, have all given me profound insight into the tradition and provided crucial practical assistance. The merit of any benefit accruing from this book is dedicated to their aspiration. Also, I am very grateful to Martin Parenchio and my wife Meryl for their help in editing the manuscript.

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